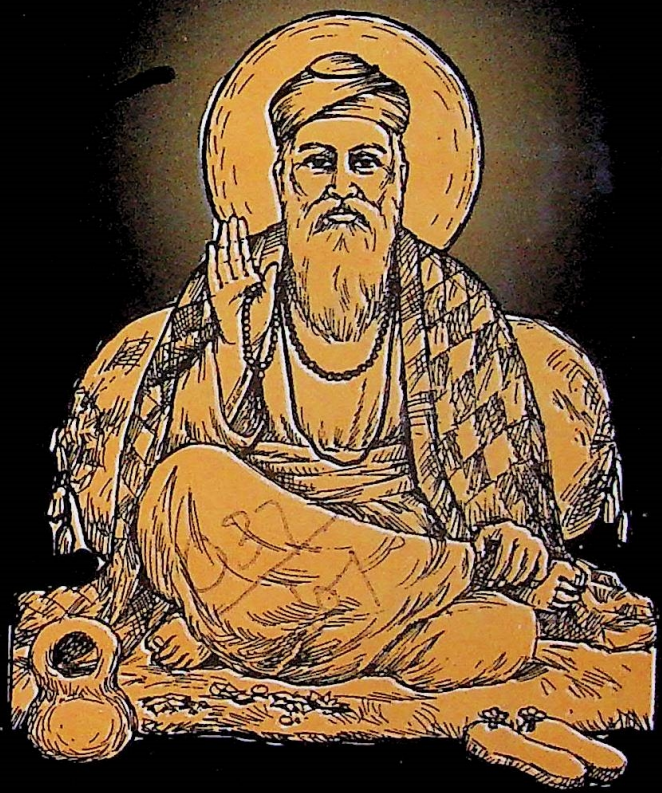

NANAK
THE SAINT

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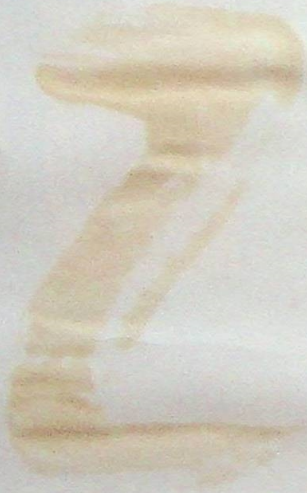

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PREFACE

This work seeks to demolish the prevalent myths that Nanak founded Sikhism; that he was a social reformer; that he believed that all religions lead to the same end; that God is the same, by whatever name he may be remembered; that he tried to combine features of Hinduism with those of Islam; that he sought to perpetuate his teachings through a continuous succession of gurus (preceptors); that he held some places or books as sacred substitutes of a living guru; that he stood for waging struggles or wars or propaganda for his spiritual beliefs; that he worshipped *Om* or *Hari* or this or that deity of this or that faith; that he performed all sorts of miracles; that he was not a disciple of Kabir and so on. When he refused to be dubbed as a Hindu or a Muslim, he meant to suggest that his path had so far been unknown to the traditional faiths. Nanak emphatically repudiated the argument that one will reach God, by whatever path one travels. He firmly held that by traversing one course, one will reach a particular goal and no other. He distinguished between articulate names like *Rama*, *Krishna*, or *Khuda*, and *Kriyatmak Names* like *Murari*, *Khrari*, *Madhu Sudan*, on the one hand, and Inarticulate Names like *Niranjan* or *Om*, on the other, all of which are "uncaused" or "unstruck" (*Anahat*). He insisted that the recitation of the latter alone counts.

Nanak held *Satnam* as the Supremo of the Region of Truth (*Sachh Khand*) which is the region of pure spirit. The *Satnam* created the *Kaal Purush* (Satan) or the lord of the three-layer universe: (1) *Brahamand* where mind and matter are pure but both are subservient to the spirit; (2) the *Und* which is the lower portion of *Brahamand* and is presided over by *Shakti* (Goddess) and is inhabited by Brahma (Producer), Vishnu (Sustainer) and Siva (Destroyer); and the *Pind* where pure spirit is subservient to gross matter and mind. Man's ultimate goal is to cross this three-layer universe and reach the Region of Truth. This can be attained only through Grace (*Mauj*) of the perfect living preceptor, the *Satguru*, who is an adept in the technique of *Surat-Shabd-Yoga* (listening by spirit to the "unstruck melody"). This is the path unencumbered by pilgrimage, fastings, canons, rituals, or ceremonials. This is his *Ai Panth*.

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1

NANAK'S ENVIRONMENT

Guru Nanak was born at 1 AM on 15 April, 1469 in a village called Talwandi, later called Nankana Sahib, now in Pakistan, about 56 kms to the south-west of the city of Lahore, in the house of Kaliyan Dass Mehta (Mehta Kalu), a Patwari (a minor revenue official) and a Vedi (Bedi) Khatri by caste. Surprisingly, his birthday is celebrated on the full moon day of the 8th Indian month (Kartik) which usually occurs in November (in 1989, the Nanak Jayanti fell on 13 November). Talwandi was a silent, sleepy village unknown to the outside world. It had been occupied by the Rajputs in the 14th century and rebuilt as a township which the Muslim rulers destroyed until it was restored as an estate to a Rajput of Bhati clan, Rai Bhoe, a retainer of the Delhi Sultan. His son, Rai Bular, became the village *Mukhia* (head of the village) when Nanak was born. Nanak's mother, Tripta, was a simple woman, devoted to her husband who was a thoroughly worldly-wise man, with money-earning as his sole passion. Nanak had one elder sister, Nanaki, who loved Nanak and who was married to Jai Ram, an official at the court of Nawab Daulat Khan Lodi at Sultanpur (Punjab).

Nanak was married in 1483 (at the age of 14) to Sulakshna or Sulakhani, the daughter of one Moola Chona, a resident of Batala in Gurdaspur district. In their 14 years of a full married life they had two sons, Srichand (born in 1494) and Laxmi Chand (born in 1497). Among his close friends, Nanak had Mardana, son of Mir Badre, a *Mirasi* (one who attends to dancing girls), and nine years senior to Nanaki. The other was Lehna, a *Shakti*-worshipper who was later picked up by him as his *Gurumukh* (disciple-in-chief) and his spiritual heir and successor, in the face of stiff opposition of Sulakshna who preferred her sons for a sort of dynastic succession.

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II

During Nanak's life-time, India had become "a congeries of States" and by 1520-22, she was an easy prey to an invader who had the strength and will to attempt her conquest. Indeed, in about 1515, feeling deep anguish at the prevailing lawlessness, the religious bigotry and the Pathan 'rulers' oppressive policies, Nanak predicted Babur's coming invasion. Addressing his old devotee, Bhai Lalo, he said :

As the word of God cometh to me, I say, O Lalo !
With the marriage procession of sin, Babur hasteneth from Kabul and asketh for the hand of the bride (motherland) with brutal force, O Lalo !
Religion and honour have disappeared ; falsehood walketh in the field ;
Brahmins and Qazis would not conduct the marriage, but the devil himself performeth the ceremony.
Women, Hindu or Muslim, sing their songs through their wails;
The men sing paean of murder, O Nanak and smear their foreheads with saffron-mark of blood.
Nanak singeth the praises of Lord in this city of dead bodies,
And singeth that He who created human beings and gave justice, assigned each man his task,
He sitteth at a far off place and watcheth over us all.
Bodies will be cut into pieces like shreds of cloth ;
And then Hindustan will remember what I utter.
They shall come in 78, depart in 97, and then shall rise another disciple of a hero.
Nanak hath spoken the truth, the true word of God and the rest he will proclaim at the proper time.[1]

When people implored the saint to intercede with God on their behalf, he declined, saying that he was nobody to interfere with His Will that must reign supreme, and that he had only said what he had foreseen. The sins of omission and commission of the rulers and their subjects must be attended by their natural consequences. Every one gets his or her deserts.

At the time of Nanak's birth, Bahlol Lodi was the Sultan of Delhi who was failing to stem the rot that had set in. The central

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authority was disintegrating. Sikander Lodi, Bahlol's successor, was a bigot who was heading a theocracy set on a course of destroying the Hindu temples and their faith. Although the ruler did not very much respect the Ulemas, he persecuted the non-Muslims. He condemned Bodhan, a Brahmin, to death simply because he had affirmed that Islam was a true religion, as Hinduism was.[2]

Sikandar died in 1517 and was succeeded by Ibrahim Lodi whose relations with his nobles were anything but cordial. His governor of the Punjab, Daulat Khan Lodi, refused to come to Ibrahim's rescue so that he invited Babur, the ruler of Kabul to invade the Lodi ruler of India. Babur had also been invited by Rana Sangram Singh to attack the Lodi empire.

In 1522-27, Delhi had been reduced to Agra, the Doab, Biyana and surrounding areas and fragments of Chanderi. As Punjab was held by Daulat Khan, Sindh, Multan, Bengal and Orissa had established independent principalities. The Rajput confederacy had augmented their power due to internecine quarrels in the central states. The kingdoms of central region—Gujarat, Malwa and Khandesh—witnessed Rana Sanga at the height of his intrepidity but he was eventually broken in the historic battle with Babur at Khanwah in 1527, near Sikri, 25 miles from Agra. Khandesh was under the Faruqi kings and there was the powerful Vijayanagar kingdom in the South. Ibrahim was beaten at Panipat on 12 April, 1526. India had passed under the Moghuls. Babur died in 1530 and was succeeded by Humayun.

Humayun had to struggle all his life. In 1540, he lost the battle of Kanauj to Sher Khan (Sher Shah). That was about one year after the death of Nanak in 1539.

III

Guru Nanak had witnessed the bitter struggle among the Indian rulers about whom he said that "kings are tigers and their officials dogs."[3] And again :

The Kal age is a drawn sword, kings are butchers;
Justice has taken wings and fled.
In this dark night of falsity, the moon of truth is not visible;
I am bewildered and in this darkness, no path is visible.[4]

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His fervent prayer was :

> Of thy own Grace, O God, save the world in agony !
> Raise all unto Thee, whichever way they may be raised.[5]

The Hindus were treated as Jimmis and had to pay additional taxes, like Jizia as also the pilgrimage tax. Politically, the five Muslim rulers and two non-Muslims, kept on fighting each other. These included Sultan Hussain Sharqi at Jaunpur, Sultan Muhammad Muzaffar in Gujarat, the Bahmanis in the Deccan, Sultan Mahmud of Malwa (Mandu), Nusrat Shah of Bengal, the Raja of Bijanagar and Rana Sanga.[6] About the country and its people, Babur says :

> The country and towns of Hindustan are extremely ugly. All its towns and lands have a uniform look ; its gardens have no walls ; the greater part of it is a level plain. The banks of its rivers and streams, in consequence of the rushing of the torrents that descend during the rainy season, are worn deep into the channel, which makes it generally difficult and troublesome to cross them. In many places, the plain is covered by a thorny brushwood to such a degree that the people of the parganas, relying on these forests, take shelter in them, and trusting to their inaccessible situation, often continue in a state of revolt, refusing to pay their taxes. In Hindustan, if you except the rivers, there is little running water. Now and then, some standing water is to be met with. All the cities and countries derive their water from wells or tanks, in which it is collected during the rainy season. In Hindustan, the populousness and decay, or total destruction of villages, nay cities, is almost instantaneous. Large cities that have been inhabited for a series of years (if, on an alarm, the inhabitants take to flight), in a single day, or a day and a half, are so completely abandoned that you can scarcely discover a trace or mark of population.
>
> Hindustan is a country that has few pleasures to recommend it. The people are not handsome. They have no idea of the charms of friendly society, or frankly mixing together, or of familiar intercourse ; they have no genius, no comprehension of mind, no politeness of manner, no kindness or fellow-feeling, no ingenuity or mechanical invention in planning or executing their handicraft works, no skill or knowledge in

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design or architecture ; they have no good horses, no good flesh, no grapes or musk-melons, no good fruits, no ice or cold water, no good food or bread in their bazaars, no baths or colleges, no candles, no torches, not a candlestick !

The chief excellency of Hindustan is, that it is a large country and has abundance of gold and silver. The climate during the rains is very pleasant. On some days it rains ten, fifteen, and even twenty times. During the rainy season, inundations come pouring down all at once, and form rivers, even in places where, at other times, there is no water. While the rains continue on the ground, the air is singularly delightful-insomuch that nothing can surpass its soft and agreeable temperature. Its defect is, that the air is rather moist and damp. During the rainy season you cannot shoot, even with the bow of our country, and it becomes quite useless. Nor is it the bow alone that becomes useless ; the coats of mail, books, clothes and furniture all feel the bad effects of the moisture.[7]

The Hindu society was caste-ridden and caste was determined not by occupation but by birth. Even the Muslims had forgotten their old concept of fraternity, and got divided into Arab, Persian, Turk, Mongol, Pathan and Indo-Muslim racial groups. Hindu converts to Islam included certain classes which did not forget their caste-names, retained some of their characteristic social customs, and confined marriage relations within their own group. All this was in violation of the Shariat. Both Hindus and Muslims had personal slaves who could be purchased from open markets like cattle. The Hindu *Smritis* speak of 15 classes of slaves, the principal categories being : (1) born of domestic slave girl ; (2) secured by purchase ; (3) obtained as gift or charity; (4) saved from starvation during famine; (5) insolvent debtor; (6) war-prisoner; (7) a recluse returning to the life of a householder and taking employment with somebody ; and (8) one who sells himself. The Muslim slaves were mainly of 4 categories—2, 3, 6 and 8 in the above classification. Comparatively, the position of Muslim slaves was better as the careers of Shahabuddin, Tajuddin Yaldoz, Nasiruddin Qubacha, Qutubuddin Aibak, Iltutmish, Balban, Nasiruddin Khusroe, Malik Kafur and Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul illustrate.

The position of women was awfully bad and exceptions such as Mandan Misra's wife, who defeated Shankaracharya in a philosophical

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combat (*Shastrarth*) only proved the rule. Polygamy was widely practised and co-wives rendered homes a hell. Among the Muslims, the *harem* was almost a brothel with scores of mistresses. Widows had no right to remarry. *Sati* was often resorted to. *Purdah* and child marriages were rampant. Female babies were held as curse. Debauchery and adultery were the accepted norms. Firuz Tughlaq had even banned the visit of women to holy shrines because bad characters frequented them and waylaid the female visitors. India was rich but the Indians were poor ! People ate opium and *bhang*. Religion meant bath in the holy rivers, pilgrimages, obedience to corrupt Mullas, Qazis and Brahmins, and worship of graves.

This, then, is the scenario in which the great saint Nanak was born and grew. The Muslim midwife, Daultan, revealed that the little infant "laughed like a grown-up" on delivery, and the family astrologer, Hardayal, is supposed to have predicted an extremely brilliant career, so that all communities would worship him. Mehta Kalu failed to realize its import, and money-minded as he was, interpreted the prediction to mean that his son would be a great man of the world.

In broad terms, then, Nanak was born in an age of anxiety, an era of crisis and a phase of history marked by quest for truth and inquiry, not only into the realms of the physical universe hitherto lying unexplored but also into the inmost nature of man. Man was in search not only of what lay outside of him, but also in search of himself. Being the contemporary or near contemporary of Martin Luther, Columbus, Shakespeare, Vasco-de-Gama, Babur, Kabir and Michaelangelo, Nanak not merely witnessed the birth of new empires and the discovery of new lands and sea-routes but also of protest against established dogma and social habits of man. Languages were contending for supremacy as much as ideas. Art and architecture, music and poetry, theatre and dance were finding new modes of expression along with tyranny and bloodshed becoming the spearheads of new conquering faiths. Thanks to the genius of Nanak, he, contrary to the popular belief, did not merely stop short at reform in religious or social conduct of the individual but planted the germs of a new people in whom the whole man could find self-expression and fulfilment.

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IV

Now, Nanak did not believe in showing miracles ; no saint ever does. Scientifically, a belief based upon miracles or a show of supernatural powers cannot endure. So long as a doctrine or a tenet is not fully comprehended by the reasoning faculty, in all its intellectual and metaphysical dimensions, it is not likely to produce even intellectual conviction of a lasting character.[8] Even today innumerable people profess Hinduism (which really is not a religion), Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Jainism, and even the so-called "Sikhism" without understanding the content of their teachings. They cannot be said to believe in them. They are ignorant of their own scriptures which they do not take the pains to read or understand properly, nor do they seek instructions from any properly qualified adept.[9]

And, yet, in almost every case, the followers of a faith or a saint or "Guru" begin to attribute all sorts of miracles to it or him, presumably to impress the common people who evidently are drawn by them. Anyone who refuses to perform them is supposed to be a fraud or a cheat or an ordinary person devoid of spirituality. Nanak is no exception to this practice. His people began to attribute to him all sorts of demonstration of supernatural powers and miracles. The *Janam Sakhis* (life-stories) describe these miracles and can, therefore, hardly serve as the source material for Nanak's spiritual message.[10] They are, by and large, legendary and read like fiction. The *Janam Sakhi* furnished by Bala who accompanied Nanak in some of his journeys are hardly any guide to what Nanak said and did. Same holds true of the *Janam Sakhis* such as Puratan, Meherban, Gyan and Ratnawali. The *Hafizabad Janam Sakhi* and the *Vilayat Wali Janam Sakhi* obtained by HT Colebrook from East India House Library, belong to the *Puratan Janam Sakhi* category. The *Gyan Ratanawali Janam Sakhi* written by Bhai Mani Singh is supposed to have received the Guru's assent but there is no supporting evidence on this behalf, just none that can be relied on. Most of the miracles attributed to Nanak owe their origin to these *Janam Sakhis* which lack historicity and authenticity.

Then, there are some references to contemporary period of Indian history in *Var Ram Kali* in the Adi Granth. There are also allusions to Gorakhnath, Charpat and Bharathari. But they were not

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Nanak's contemporaries. References to Mount Sumeru and the *Goshthi* (intellectual discourses with the *Siddhas*) do not find historical support. The biographical account found in the works of Bhai Gurdas, the nephew of Guru Amardas (his *Vars* or Odes) depict a picture of Nanak but it also suffers from panegyrics and poetic exaggerations. The emergence of Nanak is compared to a light clearing the mist and we are told that the days of *Kalyuga* itself are numbered. Obviously, it is very much there even today. Bhai Gurdas also describes Nanak's visit to Mecca and recounts the famous incident at the Kaaba. It is reported that at Mecca, Nanak slept turning his feet towards the Kaaba, the House of God, and that incensed the head-priest Rukunuddin who kicked the "infidel." Nanak then told the priest that he was too tired and could not get up, and that if the priest liked, he could turn his feet to any direction he wanted or to that direction where God was not present. The priest is supposed to have dragged Nanak's feet towards another direction but surprisingly saw the same vision of Kaaba there also.

Now, similar fables are attributed to other men or women of God. Rabaa-Basri, for instance, is supposed to have got a little exhausted on her way to Mecca and she is reported to have found the Kaaba coming towards her. Hazrat Ibrahim Adham, we are told, took 14 years in reaching Mecca but failed to see the Kaaba. A voice from heaven then declared : "Kaaba has gone to welcome a weak and poor woman (Rabaa-Basri) who is coming in this direction."[11]

Such stories appear to be pure inventions by some admirers of the sages. What is said of one is, at times, attributed to the other. The real researcher has to separate the grain from the chaff. It is not argued here that Nanak was spiritually incapable of performing such deeds. He was among the greatest saints of all times and there was hardly anything beyond him. But what is argued here is that he would never descend to this level ; there was no need for him to do so. He needed nobody's certificate as to his spiritual supremacy. It was not necessary for him to impress anybody or to convert anyone into his fold. He had, indeed, no fold ; he founded no faith. He had no revelation; he put forward no rituals, no dogmas, no book or *Granth*, no temple, no gurdwara. And, yet he showed the Path to the Fallen Humanity, if only people have the eye to see it.

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Then, there are some works which are wrongly attributed to Nanak--Pran Sangli, Yog Marg, Ramkali Ratan Mala, Gyan Sarod, Naseehat-Nama, Hazir-Nama, Pak-Nama, Kalmi-Nama, Goshthi with Malyar and several other Goshthis. Guru Arjun Dev himself, at the time of compiling the Adi Granth rejected these works as unauthentic. Hymns like "jit dar lakh Mohammad da" are definitely not Nanak's. Equally unreliable is Bhai Santokh Singh's Gur Pratap Surya Udaya (Sooraj Prakash), an 18th century work, and Mohsin Fani's Dabistan-i-Mazahib. Gyani Keshar Singh Chibbar's history of Nanak's family is studded with imaginary embellishments. Gyani Gulab Singh's *Gur Pranali* is a poetic composition. Gyani Gyan Singh's History of Guru Khalsa is a shade more trustworthy in regard to the life of Nanak, but only a shade. Kahn Singh's works done in 1906, and 1911-12 have some distortions but can be said to be useful contributions—Ham Hindu Nahin, Gurmat Prabhakar and Gurmat Sudhakar. Vir Singh's Guru Nanak Chamatkar (1928) is also useful.

V

We are thus left to Nanak's major treatise "Japji" and his Banis (hymns) contained in the Adi Granth. Japji has 38 sections which contain Guru Nanak's basic teachings. Anyone who claims to be Nanak's disciple (*Shishya* or Sikh) owes to himself to judge his position in the context of what Japji contains. Anything which seeks to supersede it or modify it or alter it or add anything to it which runs counter to it, is running against Guru Nanak's teachings (*Seekh*). These 38 sections are concluded by the hymn : *Pawan Guru, Pani pita; mata dharti mahatvo* ;

Diwas raat dui dayee daaya khelay sajal jagatta ;
Changiaiya buraaiya vaachay dharmu hadoori ;
Karmi apo aapni ke neray ke dur ;
Jinni Naam dhayaya gaye masakhati ghali ;
Nanak to mukh ujjaley keti chutti naal.

Herein lies "Nanakism" if one is allowed to use that expression which is better than "Sikhism". It means that air is like Guru to human beings. As Guru dispels the darkness of ignorance, air removes the gloom from within the body. The latter will cease to exist in the absence of air. Water is like father, for, it is from a drop that man

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as well as birds are created. Earth is the great mother because she sustains all. Day and night are the two nurses, one male and the other female. The whole world is playing in their laps. Good and evil deeds are judged in the presence of *Dharam Rai*. Everybody reaps the fruits of his own actions. Some are kept close and others at bay ; some are sent to paradise and others hurled into hell. The virtuous and sinners alike are under the control of *Dharam Rai*. Those who contemplate Name or practise Sumiran of Name are out of his jurisdiction. The toils of those who have contemplated Name or performed the Sumiran of Name are accepted and crowned with success. Says Nanak, only they are the worthy ones and, through their instrumentality many are emancipated.

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2

NANAK'S LIFE : 1469-1497

Much of what has been written about Nanak's life borders on imagination and fiction. Even the date of birth has been a matter of dispute. By all historical evidence, he was born on April 15, 1469 but those who claim to follow his "teachings" (Seekh) insist on the full moon day ending the 8th Hindi month (Kartik) so that officially the birthday of Nanak is celebrated in November.[1] Legend has it that the baby laughed like a grown-up when he was born, that there was "heavenly music" all around, "clouds of light" were on the sky and "33 crore gods arrived to pay homage to the Guru."[2] The family astrologer, Hardayal, we are told, on seeing the babe greeted him with joined palms, declaring that he would sit under a royal canopy and be worshipped by Hindus and Muslims alike and that even the inanimate objects of nature would utter his name with reverence.[3] Hardyal must have been a superb astrologer to have grasped the meaning of Nanak's life even before he had a chance to draw his horoscope ! Evidently, such tales are the product of fanciful imagination of the people, coming into vogue much later. A similar fable has it that the infant would like to sit in seclusion most of the time, and would assume the posture of *Padmasana*, and invariably utter some word or the other in the manner of repeating the Lord's name. We are further informed that when only 5 years, he would explain to his friends religious matters and the greatness of the Supreme Being and would give away everything he could lay his hands on to fakirs or visitors.[4]

II

It is said that Nanak, as a child never played the normal games which children are fond of. Indeed, he would not stir out to play at all. Assuming this trait, a fable came to be woven that one day his mother pressed him to move out in the company of other children. Nanak agreed but asked his companions if they would play the same old games or would like to try something new. They chose the

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latter course. Nanak at once made all the boys sit around in a circle himself assuming the posture of Padmasana and asked them to repeat the words *Sat Kartar* (the Real Creator) mentally. When his mother came to see what he was actually doing, she was surprised to see her son sitting like a saint.[5]

Every effort, sometimes the most ludicrous, appears to have been made to prove that Nanak was not merely a precocious child, which without doubt he was, but that he was also a child with divine spark for everyone to see. It is thus stated that his eyes were refulgent, shining gloriously bright and his countenance was serene reflecting knowledge, intelligence and wisdom. He had, we are told, an hypnotizing effect on the people with whom he talked, although he talked very little. Most of the time he remained silent as if meditating and in communion with God. One fable has it that he did not sleep at all ; another insists that he slept for a few hours and ate next to nothing. All in all, legend has painted him as the wonder child.

And, yet his mother chided him for his irresponsible acts. In response, we are told, Nanak said :

> Mother, my house is His temple, it is my home;
> As child of Almighty, I live with His Grace alone,
> Under His merciful bowers ; His pleasures are my riches all,
> And listen, His bursary, is too large to recall !

His father, Mehta Kalu, however, failed to see his son's spiritual greatness ! He was a worldly man "deeply engrossed in amassing wealth and aspiring for fame" and was perturbed over the extraordinary activities of Nanak. It is difficult to buy tales of this sort, for, by common consent most of the worldly people take deep interest in miracles and in extraordinary children who seem to possess supernatural powers. By and large, they seek to use religion for mundane purposes and they are naturally drawn towards men of religion. But witness this gem :

> Life meant for the Mehta, nothing but seeking worldly pleasures. The precocious child could not impress him, nor could he was able (sic) to mould his father. When the child talked about the greatness of the Almighty, the father

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felt simply baffled. What does a child know about the futility of life, he asked his friends. But the child's discourses on divine topics surprised one and all. His critical frame of mind was clearly visible and his protestant attitude towards life was a matter for ponderance (sic) for all his relatives. Hence the child was instructed to be wise and learn the worldly ways—earning money and making profits. The child promised to obey, though he proved merely a helpless creature, his motivation power being in someone else's control.[6]

The inventors of tales and fables rarely bother about the innumerable contradictions they carry along with their products. We are told that when Nanak was 6 or 7 his father consulted his astrologer about the future course of action. This wonderful astrologer advised that the child be sent to a school which would keep him away from the company of the sadhus, saints and fakirs and that when educated he would join some service. The child was accordingly despatched to Gopal Pandit's *Pathshala* (primary school) to study Hindi. This was in 1475 or 1476. There are quite a few tales invented to cover this phase of Nanak's life. It is said that when Gopal asked the child to learn the alphabet, he stuck up with the first letter of Urdu script (*Alif* or A) and declared that that letter alone was sufficient for him because it represented the absolute uniqueness of the Lord. Another tale says that when Gopal asked Nanak to learn the numerals, the latter said : "Any person, who had learnt how to maintain accounts of worldly transactions, had to go through much pain and suffering, and so, I have nothing to do with such things. I have come to learn only the name of the Lord and you, too, would do well to give up this kind of false and worthless education and learn the true and right lessons." Hearing this, it is said, Gopal fell at Nanak's feet and thereafter, started deriving the benefit of his *Satsang* in seclusion, off and on.

Yet another tale insists that in response to Gopal's order to learn the alphabet, Nanak wrote an acrostic or an alphabetical poem giving the inner meaning of each letter which he said was a symbol to denote either the unity of God or his wondrous creation, or the need to dwell upon Him. A fourth fable says that this poem was written by Nanak at a later stage—evidently because nobody would be willing to buy the tale that such a poem could be written by a child. The poem in question is :

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Burn the worldly attachments, grind their ashes and make thy ink ;
Write on the clean paper of thy heart with the pen of love ;
And write wisdom as instructed by the Divine Master,
And write the name of God, His praises ;
Write that He hath neither end nor limit.
O friend, learn to write this account,
So that, when an account is called from thee,
Thou mayest win a mark of true honour.[7]

Three years later, in 1478, Mehta tried another teacher, Pandit Brij Lal, to teach Nanak Sanskrit. When Brij Lal asked him to write the alphabet on the slate, Nanak reacted : "Teach me only one, large letter of life ; tell me the Creator, wonder of the world, unmasked." He sang another hymn which was a discourse on God, man and the universe :

The Creator of the world pervades everywhere.
What is illusion and what is doubt ?
Good is only that which pleases Him.
Give no blame to others, the blame lies within myself, on my *Karma*.
As I sowed, so shall I reap.
I should not blame anybody for my grief.
It is only He who gives and none else.
He has created all and sustains all;
Meditate His Name only and get yourself absorbed in Him.
Strive for the gain His name will give, day and night.[8]

Brij Lal was obviously flabbergasted at this display of spiritual outburst and returned his custody to Mehta who rushed to rebuke and reprimand the child. We are then asked to believe that Brij Lal revealed to Mehta that Nanak was an *Avatara* (a prophet of God), a Divine Sound and that he had come to redeem the fallen humanity from the clutches of *Kalyuga* (Kali or Dark Age), and that he did not need any instruction. Brij Lal had asked Nanak as to who was his guru and he replied that knowledge was it, and that he knew the secret springs of life.

Thereafter, it appears that Nanak's father decided in 1480, to send him to a Muslim teacher, Maulana Rukunuddin, to learn Persian,

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but here also Nanak showed his earlier reluctance to pick up anything worthwhile. But, there are other tales that contradict this. The Siar-ul-Mutakhrin states that Nanak was carefully educated by some Sayyid Hasan, a neighbour of his father's who conceived a regard for him, and who was wealthy but childless. Nanak, it is further said in the same book, had studied the most approved writings of the Mohammadans. According to Malcolm[9] Nanak is reported by the Mohammadans to have learnt all earthly sciences from Khizar—the Prophet Elias. The ordinary Mohammadan accounts also represent Nanak, when a child, to have astonished his teacher by asking him the hidden import of the first letter of the alphabet, which is almost a straight stroke in Persian and Arabic and which is held to denote the unity of God.[10] The reader will remember that the apocryphal gospels state how Christ, before he was twelve years old, perplexed his instructors and explained to them the mystical significance of the alphabetical characters (Strauss, Life of Jesus, i-272). "There is reason to believe", continues Cunningham,[11] "that in his youth he made himself familiar with the popular creeds both of the Mohammadans and Hindus and that he gained a general knowledge of the Quran and the Brahmanical *Shastras*. A close study of the hymns of Nanak which are handed down to us in the Granth convince us that they are the utterances of a man who is well versed in the religious literature of his time. Such intimate knowledge as Guru Nanak shows in his writings could not have been acquired by a mere intercourse with people professing those religions."

III

Nanak's education has been extremely controversial. There are two groups of people who try to represent Nanak as uneducated. First, we have the faithful disciples of his own, the Sikh biographers of the past, who contended that the Guru was sent to his village school but he did not read anything in them. They thought it below the spiritual dignity of their prophet to learn to read and write from ordinary men and like ordinary men.[12] Some Hindu thinkers, especially the Arya Samajists, have taken advantage of such writings. They belong to the second group. They say that Nanak's condemnation of the Vedas and other Hindu *Shastras* was due to his ignorance because as he was uneducated he could not have read them.[13]

In fact, it appears that after the elementary education in his village schools, Nanak took to private study, spent much time in

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meditation and in association with religious men. He wandered in the dense forests[14] around his home, and there met the religious teachers and reformers of his day, ascetics and wandering fakirs. From them he must have learnt the subtleties associated with religious controversy.

In any case, Nanak had become secluded and was driven to forests to seek peace and solace. In 1480-81, Nanak studiously avoided human contact and enjoyed being on the grassy fields, tree shades and flowing streams. Mehta then decided to use Nanak for tending cattle. But legend says that here also Nanak remained in dialogue with his Maker. One day he took the cattle out, sat under a banyan tree, meditating on God, while the cattle grazed another's farm. The aggrieved farmer reported the matter to Mehta who got annoyed and thought of thrashing the child. Meanwhile, the village headman, Rai Bular happened to come and interceded on behalf of Nanak, even offering to pay off the entire loss of crop suffered by the complainant. According to the fiction enshrined in *Puratan Janam Sakhi*, when people went to see the grazed farm, they saw the crop intact.

Meanwhile, another fable which is narrated by Indian chroniclers about every saint they can lay their hands on, relates to the protection afforded to the child-saint by a cobra. How could they forget such a favourite theme in relation to Nanak ? And, so we are given to understand that one day as Nanak slept in the pasture ground, a cobra spread its hood over his head to protect him from the scorching sun ! Such stories are invented to prove that the sage in question, from his infancy, had been showing signs of divinity.

This episode of cattle-grazing is followed by yet another fable : that of the stand taken by Nanak on the occasion of the ceremony of investment of the sacred thread or *Janeu* arranged by his father, with the assistance of that very family priest, Hardayal, who is supposed to have discovered the divinity of the child at birth. When he tried to put the sacred thread a round the child's torso, descending down his own shoulder, Nanak is supposed to have held the priest's hand and to have stopped him from doing so, on the plea that that kind of sacred thread was of no use, and declared : "If compassion be the cotton, contentment the thread, continence the knot, and Truth the twist, these would weave an ideal thread for the soul. This thread will neither break nor burn, neither get soiled nor washed nor lost. He who

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wears such a thread on his neck is the one blessed of God." He also told Hardayal that his mantras could not have made the ordinary cotton thread sacred. When the priest protested, Nanak replied :

> The thread hardly worth four pice is put on around the neck, making the child sit at a neat and clean place. Mantras are muttered in the wearer's ears and the Brahmin becomes the Guru. But when the wearer dies, the thread falls down and the wearer goes threadless. Countless robberies, villainies are committed against fellow-beings. Day and night people are looted and deceptions are practised. And yet the cotton thread is spun and the Brahmin comes to twist it. For holding the ceremony, a goat is killed, cooked and eaten and then it is said that the *Janen* should be put on. However, when the thread becomes old, it is invariably thrown away and new one is put in its place. Nanak ! The thread cannot be broken, if it had little strength in it.[15]

On Hardayal's further enquiry as to what Nanak meant by "real, sacred thread," the child declared :

> Out of the cotton of mercy spin the thread of contentment,
> The knots of continence,
> Give it twist of righteousness.
> O, Priest, put around me such a thread,
> If thou hast it,
> It will not break once worn,
> Nor burnt, lost or get soiled.
> Blest is the man, O Nanak, who weareth such a thread.[16]

Then, we have the story of the visit of Nanak's auntie (Tripta's sister) to their residence sometimes in 1482. She is reported to have seen Nanak distributing to *sadhus* and beggars food and clothes from his house. She told her sister (Tripta, Nanak's mother) that possibly Nanak had gone crazy, on hearing which Nanak prophesied : "Auntie ! a mad man like me will be born in your home also." And, then, it is said, that indeed a certain mahatma called Ram Ratna came to be born in her family, and that amongst the *Bairagi Sadhus*, he is considered to be a great *Gyani*.[17]

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Disappointed, Kalu Mehta asked Nanak to take up farming. Nanak's reaction is supposed to have followed the usual pattern. He sang a hymn :

The body is the field,
The mind is the farmer;
Let it be watered with endeavour,
Let the Lord's Name be the seed;
And the contentment the furrowing,
Let humble living be the fence;
In it the crop of love will grow,
Fortunate indeed are such homes;
O Sir, money hath lured away the whole world,
Yet few persons knoweth this ![18]

He is reputed to have evolved a farming symbolism suggesting that man's mind is the ploughman ; right conduct, the cultivation ; humility, the watering of it ; God's own essence, the seed ; contentment, the barrow ; poverty and maliging (*ninda*), the protective fence : love, the fertilizer. When his father suggested to him to launch some business, Nanak announced :

Let time and space be my shop,
Let it be stocked with Almighty's Name,
And Divine thought within heart the store.
In it let the Lord be treasured,
Let the trade be with His devotees;
Thus the wealth of truth be accumulated,
And thou become happy.[19]

His father is, then, supposed to have asked Nanak as to how he was going to pull on in this difficult world and with what means. The child, we are told, told his father : "I'll grow so much in my farm that it will be sufficient not only for me and my family, but the whole world. After one has eaten out of my hands, he would crave no more." Mehta, then asked his son to identify his Lord or God. Nanak's reply was : "Everyone hears of Him as great, and calls Him so, but he alone knows His worth who sees His presence. O father ! My Master's worth can be measured not, for he who loves Him merges in Him. One would compare Him if there were one to compare Him with.

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So everyone who knows Him says : O Lord, Thou art what only Thou art."

And when his mother Tripta implored Nanak to behave normally and mend his ways so that the village folk might stop talking of his mounting madness, the child is supposed to have advised her : "O Mother, the call has come to me from yonder lands to save the world which is on fire. Would you rather that everyone of us is burnt to ashes or that as many of us as may be are saved from its all-consuming flames." Everyone now agreed that Nanak was suffering from some grave psychological ailment and needed medical attention.

Mehta summoned the village physician (*vaidya* following the Ayurvedic system of medicine), Haridas. When he began to feel Nanak's pulse he bewailed :

The physician has been called for,
He feeleth my pulse to diagnose my ailment;
But alas ! the ignorant physician doth not know,
That the malady is not in my body but in my soul.[20]

Haridas asked Nanak to enlighten him about the malady of the soul, the latter elucidated :

There is the pain of separation and hunger,
Then again there is the pain from the fear of the messenger of Death.

And also the pain of disease that overtaketh the body;
O, ignorant physician, no medicine would affect me;
The pain continues, the body remains in affliction.[21]

The physician is reported to have got confused and sought further clarification, on which Nanak sang :

My one malady is, that I live separated from myself,
And the other, that I seek to be what I ought to be ;
And the third, that I'm in the eye of the all-powerful angel of death;

And the fourth, that I can sit not with myself.
O man, the malady is not in thy body, but in thy soul;
Which if pure and whole, maketh also the body healthful and whole.[22]

The physician asked Nanak as to the causes of these maladies

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and their cure. The young sage is supposed to have declared : "Pleasures are the sickness of the soul, and their medicament lies in the courting of pain." The physician raised his hands and gave up the attempt to cure Nanak. His father and mother then pleaded with Nanak that he should pay some regards to them, for even the Scriptures ordained that, there was nothing bigger than one's mother and nothing taller than one's father. Nanak, however, refused to budge an inch from the course on which he was set and declared :

I know not who's my father, who my mother,
And from whence I came ;
And, why have fire and water blended to make of
Me what I am . . .
Within me there's something that gnaws at my heart,
As if my soul is on fire;
And I feel, only if I submitted to my Lord's Will,
There'll be peace for me.[23]

Thereafter, Nanak's father tried to persuade his son to make a business trip to the nearby market of Chuharkana and buy some merchandize for sale at Talwandi. For this, he gave Nanak some twenty rupees and asked Bala, who was several years senior to Nanak to accompany him. On the way to Chuharkana they met a few naked sadhus wearing only loin-cloth sitting near a grove of trees. They volunteered the information to Nanak that they were hungry and had no means to eat, engaged as they were in penances and would not like to beg for food or clothes. Nanak is supposed to have thought that no business was more lucrative than feeding holy men and parted with the whole money he had, despite Bala's protests. The sadhus refused to touch money whereupon Nanak purchased food which he served to them.

He returned to Talwandi empty-handed but did not go home out of sheer embarassment. He sat down under a *pilu* tree (careya arborea), in the lotus posture. The tree, since then, has been called *Tambu Saheb* (the respected tree that served as umbrella to the divine child). Bala returned to Talwandi and told Mehta of the misadventure, which threw him in a fit of rage. He proceeded to the spot where Nanak was sitting and physically dragged him to the residence of the village headman, Rai Bular, who in his wisdom explained to Mehta that Nanak had, after all, spent the money on an

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excellent cause and that he deserved a pat on the back rather than the scene Mehta had created. The Rai even offered to compensate Mehta for the loss and pay him the twenty rupees that Nanak had spent.

IV

Mehta then sent Nanak to his son-in-law, Jairam (husband of Nanki), the store-keeper of Nawab Daulat Khan at Sultanpur (in the district of Kapurthala). Nanak had already been married to Sulakshana, daughter of Moola, a resident of Batala (district Gurdaspur), in 1485 or 1486. According to some tales, he was married not at Talwandi but at Sultanpur in 1588. Be that as it may, but when Nanak decided to go to his sister's place at Sultanpur, his wife Sulakshna also desired to accompany him. Nanak, however, assured her that as soon as he was properly settled at Sultanpur, he would call her and that meanwhile she should depend on God's will and divine protection. Rai Bular gave Nanak a farewell dinner and when he left Talwandi, we are told, "the whole village came to see him off, with tears in their eyes." The lad consoled all of them :

> Abide in the True One amidst the impurities of worldly life,
> Thus a way a true religion be found.[24]

Reaching Sultanpur along with a companion, Mardana, Nanak was introduced by Jairam to the Nawab who, according to legend, was impressed by Nanak's demeanour, and appointed him as the storekeeper in his grocery or "Modikhana" where revenue was received in the form of food grains and from where ration was issued to the nawab's employees. According to the legend contained in the *Janam Sakhis*, Nanak soon acquired a reputation for honesty, generosity and good manners. "Every night", we are told, "he sang hymns ; he fed everyone who came. An hour and a quarter before the dawn, he would go to the Bein river for bathing and by about 8 AM he would return to the stores for his work."

We referred to Mardana above. He was 9 years older than Nanak and was a Mirasi, son of one Mir Badr, a resident of Talwandi. Mardana loved music and played on *rabab* or rebeck, and he accompanied Nanak in some of his journeys. At the nawab's grocery, Nanak distributed to fakirs and sadhus four times the amount of food grains he would weigh out from the nawab's household, and

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was cloth-dealer) is Guru Charan, one will identify that very person whose name Guru Charan is, for this name is not separate from the being or identify of that person. This name is, therefore, deemed to be that person's "essential name". Likewise, *Satnam* is the essential name of the *Sat Purush* ; it is, moreover, His *dhwaniyatmak* (Sound) or innate (essential) name. If, therefore, *Sat* is removed from that name, nothing will or can be understood. All other names are only *varnatmak* (conventional, outer or acquired). As Nanak put it :

Kirtan Naam katthe teri jibhya,
Satnam tera para purbala

Whatever names the tongue articulates are artificial or conventional or *varnatmak* names, the *Satnam* is the highest, the real, the essential, the most primary, the most ancient or *dhwaniyatmak* Name.

The Supreme Being, as stated earlier, manifests Himself unbegotten ; He is not "born" like the rest of species. "Birth" is ruled out in His case. How then can He manifest Himself to us and show us the Path ? Man is created by Him in His own image; he is the crown of species. The soul in man must necessarily be an integral part of the Supreme Being Himself. The physical frame in which that soul is encased has been shaped in a manner that through this medium, He can manifest Himself to us. He must, therefore, appear to us in the human form[27] and in no other. In no other way or form can He appear to us or show us His Path. Such a Person is the *Satguru*, who apparently, but only apparently, seems to be "born" like any other human being, out of the union of man and woman. But, in reality, He is yet free from the cycle of transmigration and does not suffer the pains of birth or death. There is no difference between Him and the Sat Purush ; they are one and the same. As Nanak said :

Guru Parmeshwara ek hee jaan,
Bhula kahe phira ajaan"

The Supreme Being and the *Satguru* are one and the same. Any other concept is erroneous and an exercise in futility. Nanak said again :

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Hari Harijan douu ek hain, duja sab aakaar
Duja maite Hari bhaje, tau paave kartar.

Remembering the Guru and no other, you can attain the Supreme Being.

Hari Harijan duyee ek hain, vibh vichaar kuchh nahin
Jal te upje tarang jyun, jal hee bichhe samaih

The Supreme Being and the Guru are one and the same, there can be no other view. The wave emerges from the ocean and merges back into it.

The essential meaning of the hymn that is the prelude to the Japji, therefore, is that it is through the grace of the Guru that one can attain the true, eternal form of that Supreme Being, of whom the Guru is the manifestation.

VI

Going back to the story of the disappearance of Nanak in the Bein river in 1497, he remained untraced for 3 days and reportedly reappeared on the fourth. He came home and distributed all his possessions amongst the poor and the needy. The *Janam Sakhis* undoubtedly dramatized this story which many have discarded as untrue. Hakim Narain Singh, however, says : "He had attained a superconscious state, in which the higher hidden faculties of his own mind were in contact with the universal mind. In this condition his own will was, for the time being, completely in abeyance. It was then being controlled by the Supreme Will. In fact, the distinction between the knower and the known had disappeared for the time being. It was a state of perfect illumination, spiritual light, an insight into depths of things. The sense of the past, the present and the future had disappeared. All space boundaries were broken so that truths of far-reaching value were being revealed. He had merged in the One Spirit, the embodiment of all knowledge and wisdom and, therefore, nothing remained outside the pale of this union. His soul found itself awakened and freed from all limitations of time and space. He saw God face to face as a spirit in the purest and the absolute form and so no illusion had remained to limit the vision."[28]

In any case, soon after his reappearance Nanak declared that "there is no Hindu, there is no Muslim." And very rightly. But

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that being so, he could not have founded another "religion" ; he could only show the real path to redemption, which undoubtedly he did. To attribute the founding of "Sikhism" to Nanak, therefore, appears absurd. But more of this in the sixth chapter.

What Nanak really meant was that he was neither a Hindu, nor a Muslim nor indeed the follower of any traditional faith. He had come as the harbinger of the only path that can redeem humanity. The pandits and the mullahs, however, viewed his declaration as profane, an act of apostasy that merited punishment. They complained to the nawab about Nanak's *kufr* (defiance of Islam). Some mullahs used spells and tried to put amulets around Nanak's neck to exercise the evil spirit which they thought had taken possession of him. Nanak, however, refused to allow this tomfoolery and declared : "Damn these people who sell the name of God."[29] When the mullah persisted, he said :

Some say, I'm, wild, others that I'm out of tune,
And some say that I'm a simple man, poor and lowly;
O people, I'm mad after my Lord,
And knoweth none other than Him;
When one is mad with the fear of God,
And recognizeth none other than the one Lord;
He alone who yoketh himself to His Master's task,
And accepteth His Will and playeth not with His love;
When man loveth the Lord and deemeth himself worthless,
And the rest of the world holy and good, he is called mad.[30]

This led some people to conclude that Nanak had turned crazy. But he asked to be left alone :

Nanak has gone mad, totally mad,
But he is mad for his Lord;
None except God doth he know,
To Him but none he showeth allegiance.
Only then may one truly mad be known,
When his madness had grown with the fear of Almighty;
Only then that mad is in sooth, O brother,
When he doth only one thing :
Obeyeth his Master's Order and Will, cheerfully and steadily.
God's Will prevaileth in him for ever,

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All wisdom is of no avail.
Then is a man really mad,
His love doth God to him extend;
Unworthy and humble doth he himself deem,
And holdeth all else in high esteem;
Nanak is made of this type,
For His sake, he be left alone.[31]

The Qazis then took the issue to the nawab, declaring that by equating Hinduism with Islam, Nanak was guilty of heresy. The nawab invited Nanak to clarify his sweeping statement that there was no Hindu and no Muslim. Nanak told the nawab that it was very difficult to be a true "Muslim" and that he doubted if even the Qazi was it :

It is far too easy to call oneself a Muslim, but far too difficult to become one;
He who believes firmly in his faith, has a right to be called a Muslim;
His deeds must accord with his faith in the Prophet,
He must scrub himself clean of pride and vanity;
He must not have any fear of life and death,
Resigned to the Will of God, believing the Creator as Supreme ;
He must quell thoughts of self,
And be compassionate to all living beings;
He alone is worthy to call himself a true Muslim.[32]

The Qazi asked Nanak as to what his religion was. He reaffirmed that he was neither a Hindu nor a Muslim. When called upon to elaborate it, Nanak replied :

Let compassion be the mosque,
Let faith and sincerity be the prayer-mat, honest living one's Quran ;
And humility the circumcision and good conduct, the fast ;
Then verily, one may be called a true Muslim.
Let virtuous deeds be the Kaaba,
And truth be the guide;
The prayer be of the Lord's grace,
And the rosary be of His will,
Then God will keep one's honour.[33]

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The Qazi then sounded Nanak if, as a holy man, he could go to the mosque and join the congregation in their prayers, which would be led by the Qazi and in which the nawab would also participate ? Nanak agreed. He went as desired. But when all of them began to be up and down in *namaz*, Nanak sat down in a corner and did not bow down as the ritual demanded. This was treated as sacrilege so that the Qazi asked him to explain his insolence and impertinent conduct which amounted to blasphemy. Thereupon, Nanak explained his concept of real prayer :

For five times a day thou say five prayers, with five different names;
The first prayer be the truth,
The second to earn honestly,
The third to share thy bread with others in God's name,
The purity of mind, the fourth one,
And adoration of God, the fifth;
If thou practiseth these five deeds,
All good deeds be thine;
Then thou hast right to call thyself a Muslim;
By simple hypocrisy, O, Nanak
Thou art deemed false.[34]

Nanak then exposed the Qazi as well as the nawab and revealed that while they were physically performing the *namaz*, their minds were elsewhere. To the nawab he said that while offering prayers he was mentally purchasing horses of fine breed at Kabul and Qandhar ; and he confronted the Qazi with the revelation that during *namaz*, he was mentally running to save the new-born foal of his mare from falling into the well in the stable and drowning. Both of them reportedly confessed these transactions and sought Nanak's protection. Nanak thenadvised them to say the following five *namaz* prayers : truth, honest earning, sharing bread with others, purity of mind and adoration of God. This is called *Panj Namaza, Waqt Panj.*

Thereafter, Nanak decided to undertake extensive spiritual tours to salvage those who had become ripe for redemption. He left his wife and two sons in the care of his father-in-law and left Sultanpur in 1497.

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3

SPIRITUAL TOURS : 1497-1510

Accompanied by Mardana, Nanak left Sultanpur in 1497 and went to Lahore. There, he held discourses with Saiyad Ahmad, the preceptor of Sikandar Lodi and probably gave instruction to several persons who were in quest of truth. Mardana was not yet spiritually ripe and sought and got presents and food from the people on the way. When he took them to Nanak, the latter reprimanded him for his desire for material possessions which would obstruct his spiritual progress. Mardana distributed them to the needy but asked Nanak how does such a charity please the master and God. Nanak's reply was that God was the Supreme Giver (*Daata*) and He gives away everything to His creation without expecting anything in return. If, similarly, His devotees also give away whatever they have earned by honest means to those who are genuinely needy, that obviously would be a God-like act. The basic preconditions of charity are that the giver must give that which he has earned by honest means to those who would not use the charity for bad ends but to satisfy their genuine needs.

II

From Lahore, Nanak reached Syadpur (presently Aminabad in Gujranwala district of Pakistan). He met there an ordinary artisan of low-caste, Lalo, who used to earn his living by making wooden pegs and iron implements and impressed Nanak by his honesty. He decided to accept his hospitality. When Mardana questioned Nanak as to the reason of his preference for Lalo, the saint told him that using the goods or foodstuff of rich people who have acquired their riches by questionable methods pollutes the bloodstream of those who use that ill-gotten money. On hearing of Nanak's arrival, Malik Bhago, the Dewan of a Pathan ruler, arranged a lavish banquet to which he invited the learned

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people (Brahmins and fakirs) and he extended the invitation to Nanak also. When the sage discovered Malik Bhago's antecedents, he declined the invitation on the ground that he preferred the company of those who are discarded by society because of low birth or status. Bhago arrogantly asked his attendants to fetch Nanak in his presence. The godman allowed himself to be brought to Malik Bhago but when he offered food to him, the latter refused. When chided for his arrogant refusal to accept Malik's offer of food and his readiness to accept the hospitality of Lalo, Nanak replied : "Your food smells of blood but that of Lalo tastes like honey" and added : "Lalo earns his living by his honest effort and then offers whatever he can afford to the needy, which transforms his offering into the sweetest of the sweet. Contrarily, the Malik is a blood-sucker and an exploiter and exacts money through cruelty and torture. Such food cannot but be stained with the blood of the weak, the innocent and the poor." Nanak said :

That which belongs to another is forbidden, like the flesh of swine to Muslim, and like cow's flesh to a Hindu;
The Guru and the Pir will grace thee, if thou refrainest from eating carrion.
Ill-gotten wealth does not become holy by breathing God's name over it;
Nor do thou gettest paradize by indulgence in pious talk.
The result of false talk is falsehood,
Only noble deeds open the road to salvation.[1]

Legend refers to a miracle attributed to Nanak who is supposed to have called for bread from the house of both Lalo and Malik Bhago. He squeezed the bread of both, turn by turn. From the bread of Lalo milk flowed ; from that of Malik, blood oozed out !

Now, as already stated in the previous chapter, no saint ever performs miracles. He does not have to multiply the ranks of his followers by attracting unqualified people who are naturally drawn by miracle-performers. Devotion which results from such performances is never stable or lasting. It can be sustained only through more and yet more miracles. A saint is not a charmer. He appears only for the redemption of those who have, through the process of spiritual evolution, graduated into proper recepients of God's grace. Moreover, the crowd of immature adherents can only do harm to

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the cause of the evolved and the mature spirits. If saints were miracle-performers, the entire society would be at their feet. But history records no such transformation of societies. Even saints like Shabri, Swapach, Prahlad, Pipa, Dhana, Narsi Mehta, Sur Das, Tulsi Das, Tulsi Saheb (Hathras), Hasan Basri, Rabba Basri, Peter, Paul, Augustine, Mansur, Shams Tabrez, Baba Farid, Hafiz, Kabir, Raidas, Maulana Rum, Mira Bai, Sarmad, Maluk Das, Gulal Saheb, Bhika Saheb, Paltu, Sahjo, Charan Das and dozens of others never performed miracles. Some of them suffered torture and even execution at the hands of their tormentors. They did perform miracles but they were inner miracles witnessed only by those who had the eye to see.

Nanak also had the divine mission to redeem those who cared. On hearing Nanak's exposition of the ill-gotten wealth and its evil effects on all those who partake of it, Malik Bhago is reported to have realized his past errors, repented and prayed for forgiveness and grace.

From Aminabad, Nanak went to Talamba (district Multan in Pakistan) where he confronted the notorious gangster, Sajjan, who appeared in the guise of a devotee and then swindled the innocent people of their wealth and killed those who offered resistance. He had built up a mosque and a temple to carry conviction to both, the Muslims and the Hindus about his pious intentions, and offered hospitality to all who came to him, and treated them with courtesy and respect. When they were asleep, he would kill them and take away their possessions. Seeing Nanak, Sajjan was delighted at the new prospect and took him to a neatly done suite. Nanak is reported to have refused to avail of the cosy beds done for him but sat down on the floor. He asked Mardana to play on the rebeck and sang :

Bronze sparkles brightly,
Rub it and it becomes black,
And a hundred washings would not make it pure.
Friends indeed are they, who stand by us in the court of Lord,
where our accounts are settled;
The houses, the mansions, painted from without, crash and are
of no value, as they are hollow from inside.

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The cranes live by river banks and are robed in white, yet they
wait for their victims and follow a nefarious trade;
Like the simmar tree, full of leaves but without any flower.
The blind carries the bundle on his head,
And walks up a steep mountain ;
The road is long and dreary,
How can he scale the heights without eyes ?
Service, goodness and cleverness are of no avail,
Only His name saves and cuts our fetters.[2]

This transformed Sajjan. A throughly reformed man, he was asked by Nanak to give away all his ill-gotten wealth amongst the needy, in the name of God. Sajjan's house become a place where people could now freely stay and offer worship.

From Multan, Nanak came down to Kurukshetra (now a district in Haryana State) where he happened to meet Raja Jagat Rai (son of Raja Amrit Rai of Hansi) who had been deprived of his estate by his enemies. He had killed a deer and was carrying its meat. When he requested Nanak for his blessings, the latter advised him to rely on the grace of God, pray and offer food to the needy. Jagat told him that he had nothing except the uncooked meat of the deer he had killed on way to Kurukshetra. Nanak directed Mardana to cook it. This incensed the local devotees who, led by a Brahmin, Nanu, had assembled at Kurukshetra for the holy bath. They came rushing at Nanak and Mardana, profusely abused them and began to stone them. The story is recorded :

And hear again, at Kurukshetra's fair and nook,
Nanak asked Mardana, to fetch fire to cook;
The orthodox aroused when his pots were touched,
Fell upon Mardana, saying I will bring you to book.
Nanak thought and very gently so said,
Evil and hatred are in his heart and head ;
Purity lies in inner self, not fire and pots,
Divinity resides, not in objects but soul instead ![3]

The sage also explained to the people that it is only those who had never seen flesh who could be exercised at its sight, that a man who is conceived in flesh, who is nothing but flesh and bones, who is fed on mother's breasts, who marries flesh and produces flesh,

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and breathes, in flesh, has no right to get perturbed at the sight of flesh. He sang :

Man is first conceived in flesh, he dwelleth in flesh :
When he quickens, he obtains a mouth of flesh ;
His bone, skin, and body are made of flesh.
When he is taken out of the womb, he seizes teats of flesh ;
His mouth is of flesh, his tongue is of flesh, his breath is in flesh.
When he grows up, he marries, and brings flesh even with him,
Flesh is produced from flesh ;
All man's relatives are made from flesh.
By meeting the true Guru and obeying God's order everybody shall go right,
If thou suppose that man shall be saved by himself,
He shall not ; Nanak it is idle to say so.[4]

When some people told Nanak that despite all that he had said about flesh and man's closeness to it, meat-eating was detrimental to spiritual progress, Nanak explained : "Do we not take water from which springs all life ? It gives life to man, as to animal and vegetation. Shall we then shun water because it produces life, is life ? And, don't the plants have life ? They breathe, they love, they live and they die! And what is one to say of those who do not eat animal flesh, but devour man and suck their blood ?"[5]

Nanak never defended non-vegetarianism. What he was arguing was that one should not fight for petty external causes, and that, instead, one should respect all life, its sanctity and show mercy to all sentient beings. He exhorted the people : "O men ! I do not eat for relish of the palate, but take whatever is offered to me in good faith by one who has earned with the sweat of his brow. It would be ungodly for me to refuse to eat what comes to me by God's Will."[6]

What Nanak really meant was that all living creatures from one end of creation to the other, have bodies of flesh. It is the Name only that is supreme in the body of man. The bodies of the masses are being consumed in the fires of transmigration. Only those who are devoted to a preceptor escape.

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From Kurukshetra, the Talwandi saint came to Panipat (another district of Haryana) where he met the great Sufi Saint, Shah Ashraf, whom Nanak greeted as *Salam Alek* in reply to Ashraf's *Salam Alaikum*. Getting curious, Ashraf asked Nanak as to the right way to salvation. Nanak replied that the way lies through total surrender to God. From Panipat, he came to Delhi where he refused to revive an imperial elephant which had died. At Mathura and Vrindavan, he witnessed the *Raas Lila* (dance and song by actors playing Krishna, Radha and other ladies who loved Krishna). He found the whole exercise as not only spiritually worthless but positively harmful in that it creates foul desires :

The disciples play and dance,
The Gurus move their feet and roll their heads ;
They throw dust on their hair, as mad do,
All this to entertain the audience.
They beat time to satisfy their hunger,
They sing for Gopis and Krishna,
And Sita and Rama ;
But he alone serves Lord on whom God showers grace.
In the dewy morning he rises with zeal,
And dwells on the wisdom of the truly wise.
Or do not the oil-presses and the spinning wheels dance ?
And the potter's wheels and the hand-mills ?
And the whirlwinds in the deserts and tops,
And the threshers and the churning-staves,
And the birds tumble with no rest,
The tumblers are innumerable and endless
Bound by their habits ;
But they dance only for recreation
They cry and wail at last.
For, he alone, O Nanak, loves God and fears Him.[7]

In 1503, Nanak reached Sialkot where he initiated Hamza Gaus, a well known fakir. He reached Haridwar towards the end of 1503. There he visited the Kushwant Ghat (river Ganges) where he saw people throwing water with their right hand towards the east, presumably as offering to their dead ancestors abiding in heaven. Nanak was provoked to splash water with his left hand westward. When questioned about this impropriety, he replied :

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"I come from the western part of India where I possess a farm at my birth-place. I am trying to water it from here." The people drew his attention to this exercise in futility. Nanak, then, countered : "If my offering cannot reach a few hundred miles away in this world, how can yours get to the other world"? And, then, he explained to them the futility of all rituals. He told them that all forms and ceremonies, without a true living faith, were useless. They could not take the soul to the feet of the Lord where alone true happiness could be obtained. What was the good of bathing in the holy waters or that of counting the beads, when the heart and mind ever wandered after impure, mundane affairs. One should live in a constant, unwavering consciousness of the presence of God, and do all acts as if in His watchful gaze. If all lived thus, they could do evil to none, they could commit no sin, they could not get entangled in idle, meaningless ceremonials. The Guru gave them the priceless gift of the True Name, awoke them to a true life of the spirit and knit their souls to the feet of the timeless, immortal Lord.

Back to the town, Nanak entered the kitchen of a holy Brahmin and took some fire from his burning earthen stove for cooking his own meals. The Brahmin went wild in rage at his defiling the kitchen. Nanak reminded him that his kitchen was already polluted by his anger and hatred for his fellow-men. This further enraged the Brahmin so much that he started abusing Nanak profusely He quietly told the Brahmin :

> Ignorance is the drummer-woman,
> Cruelty the butcheress, slander the sweeperess ;
> And the anger that destroyeth the world is like a *chandal*.
> Of what use is it, O, Brahmin if one draweth the lines round thy kitchen,
> When all the four low-castes are within thee.[8]

He then asked him to make truth, self-restraint and good deed his lines, and the utterance of God's name his ablutions so that he could become acceptable to God.

In 1504, Nanak travelled towards Pilibhit (in UP) and on the way met Sheikh Wajid, a Muslim fakir. He had now put on a mango-coloured jacket, with a white sheet on it, and donned the hat of a Muslim anchorite with a necklace of bones around his neck and saffron

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mark on his forehead. He saw Sheikh Wajid alight from a palanquin ; as soon as he came out, his attendants began to fan him and press his feet. This provoked Mardana who asked Nanak if there were two gods, one for the rich and the other for the poor. He asked him why the fellow who just sat in the palanquin had to have his feet pressed by those who had to carry the load. Nanak's reply was : "Mardana, it is all the result of one's deeds. God creates all men equal and blesses them with human form when one has the opportunity to become what one may. Some avail of this opportunity, others don't. This is how some have joy on the earth, while others suffer. But, do not mistake, O Mardana, the earthly joys to be a means to spiritual satisfaction, or even a contented life ! For, in the ultimate analysis, it is spiritual fulfilment that brings real happiness and inner integration. He who is happy now, may be unhappy tomorrow ; but a spiritually awakened and integrated mind would live ever in joy, ever in the peace of poise."

III

Reaching Pilibhit, Nanak came to Gorakhmata, a centre of yogis following Gorakhnath's cult (Nathism). In order to appreciate fully the nature of conversation between Nanak and Gorakhmata yogis, a word about Gorakhnath's philosophy would be in order. The supreme ideal of Yog Sadhna as conceived in Nathism seems to differ essentially from the conceptions of Patanjali, of the earlier and some later Buddhistic systems and even to a great extent of Sankara's Vedanta. Nevertheless we can see that the Natha ideal is analogous to what we find in the Agamic systems of non-dualistic thought in ancient and medieval India.

This ideal is described in one word as *Samarasya* which implies obliteration of traces of all kinds of existing differences, not by a process of transcendence as in Sankhya, or of sublation as in Vedantic Mayavada, but by a positive process of what may be described as mutual interpenetration. This ideal underlies the principle of unification between *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, or between Siva and Sakti. The attainment of this ideal is the Supreme Unity of *Parama Siva*, where Siva and Sakti are one undivided and indivisible whole. It is called *Maha-Sakti* in the language of the Saktas and represents the Absolute of the Sakta Agamas. It stands for the *Samata* of the Avadhuta Yogis which is really a unification,

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from the logical point of view, of *Tattwa* and *Tattwatita*, ie, the One and the Beyond.

A cursory glance at the ancient spiritual literature of India would reveal the fact that in almost all the systems associated with Agamic culture we find a strong insistence on the ideal of *Samarasya* in some form or other.

It is said that the true process of *Samarasya* begins only when the preceptor's grace has succeeded in effecting Mental Quiet. The real training cannot commence until the mind is rendered quiet and free from disturbances incidental to a sense of identity with the body. The mind being at rest, the divine bliss and experience of Pure Infinite Glory dawn on the soul which is awakened from its age-long slumber. The sense of duality disappears in the serene light of Undifferentiated Unity. This light, unbounded and one, brings out the powers of consciousness. The Universal Consciousness being once awakened produces in the yogi a perfect knowledge of his own body, which results in the illumination and stabilization of the body concerned.

In others words, this body becomes immortal and immune from the ravaging effects of time. The yogi is now an adept. This luminous form which is the essence of the supreme soul has to be made, as a further step, one which the Universal Uncreated Light of glorification (*paramapada*) already revealed. This is done through a continuous process of investigation into the real nature of *Atma*. It is to be remembered that *Samarasya* should not be a momentary attainment, but a permanent possession, in the sense that no reversal may ever occur. Before this state is made permanent after *Samarasya* is once attained, some successive moments in the supreme experience are noted :

(1) The transcendental reality is revealed as the universe ; the difference between what is formless and what has form disappears for ever and it is co-eternal with the vision of the universe in *Atma*.

(2) In the transitional stage there is a tendency in the powers to move out. This has to be restrained and the powers kept as contained within the *Atma*.

(3) The *Atma* is realised as a continuum of unbroken light with supreme dynamism.

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(4) As a result of all this there is a unique vision of being which is unborn. This is the supreme integral vision which marks the stage of *Nirutthana*. It is a vision of eternity when infinite varieties are seen as an expression of the One and when the One reveals itself in every point of the infinite.

It seems true that the Natha-Yogis view of *pind siddhi* and Patanjali's idea of *kaisampat* are not exactly the same, though it is true that in each the control of the elements is the result. The ideal of *vajradeh* was behind both and dominated the tantric Budddist also. In Nathism the fact that *pind siddhi* results from a vision of *paramapada* and is an antecedent of the unification of the two indicates that, though Patanjali's *kaisampat* aims at physical purification to its utmost extent, it can never be equated to the natural purity of *Purusha* and continues to remain an inalienable property of *Prakriti*.

The Natha ideal is first to realize *jivanmukti* through *pind siddhi* which secures an immaculate body of light free from the influence of time, *ie*. a deathless undecaying spiritual body and then to realize the highest perfection through the process of mutual integration.

Indeed as a yogi, Gorakhnath was not interested in metaphysical questions. He principally expounded and practically taught the yoga system of moral and spiritual self-discipline and demonstrated by the example of his own extraordinary life the miraculous effects of the practice of yoga. He placed before all classes of truth-seekers *Maha Yogiswara Siva* or *Adinatha* as the eternal and supreme ideal of human life as well as the Ultimate Truth of the universe. Siva, by virtue of His eternal self-luminous, self-concentrated, self-enjoying, self-perfect character eternally transcends this phenomenal cosmic system, and also by virtue of the infinite power (with infinite wisdom) inherent in His nature eternally manifests Himself without any effort or motive in infinite ways as an infinitely diversified and changeful variety of spatio-temporal phenomenal existences constituting one magnificent and beautiful and harmonious Cosmic Order, and also as an infinite number of finite individual spirits or souls playing distinctive parts in various forms under various conditions within this phenomenal Cosmic Order and capable of transcending it and consciously participating in the blissful transcendent character of Siva. Thus Siva has eternally a supra-cosmic, supra-phenomenal, supra-personal transcendent character

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as well as a freely and delightfully self-revealing, self-diversifying playful dynamic character, and similarly every individual soul also has a transcendent as well as a conditioned character. An individual soul has to realize its transcendent character, *ie*, its essential Sivahood, through the systematic practice of yoga and the attainment of the perfectly illumined state of *Samadhi*.

Gorakhnath regarded the controversy among the advocates of dualism (*dwait*) and non-dualism (*adwait*) and all other isms (*vadas*) as useless from the spiritual point of view, in as much as the Absolute Reality, the Ultimate Ground and Source of all phenomenal existences is beyond all intellectual conceptions, though realizable in supra-intellectual subject-objectless Absolute Experience in the perfectly illumined *samadhi*-state of the individual phenomenal consciousness. Philosophically, his doctrine was described as *dwaita-adwaita-vilakshana*. While fully subscribing to the *adwaita*-view of the Absolute Spirit, he did not look down upon *dwaita* as illusory or false caused by any such mysterious entity as *maya* or *avidya* essentially unrelated to the *adwaita-tattwa*. In the place of *maya-vada* of Sankara, Gorakhnath and his *sampradaya* preached *saktivada*, *sakti* being the real Absolute Power of the Absolute Spirit for His diversified self-manifestasion.

IV

Now, reaching Gorakhmata, Nanak sat down under a pipal tree which had long withered with age. Legend says that with his touch, the tree was reinvigorated. The leaders of yogis, Jhangar Nath and Bhangar Nath, came there and asked Nanak as to his antecedents, who he was, what his religion was and who his guru was. In reply, he sang, with Mardana playing on the rebeck :

O, God, is there a scale, or a weighman, or a measure or a tester of Thee ?
Is there an evaluator to put value on Thee ? Is there a Guru to make me wise in Thee ?
O love, I know not Thy limits !
For, Thou it is who pervadest the earth, the waters, the underworlds and the skies,
And art contained in all that is.[9]

The yogis asked Nanak as to the way of God-realization. Nanak replied :

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The mind is the scale, understanding the weight, and his service the weighman ; and within the heart is He to be weighed and seen and dwelt upon.

Nay, He Himself is the balance, and the tongue, and the weight and the weighman ; and Himself He sees Himself, and realises too, and deals in Himself.

But, he who's blind, and of low disposition, and a stranger to his ways, and ever wobbles in the mind, how can he and those who seek his company ever know the state or extent of God ?[10]

The yogis then asked Nanak to become a Nathist and to accept Gorakhnath's spiritual dlscipline so as to attain the super-conscious state of *Samadhi*. Nanak explained the secret of "unstruck melody" :

Yoga consists not in a patched gown, nor in the yogi's staff, nor in smearing one's body with ashes, nor in the earrings, nor a shaven head, nor in blowing of the horn.

Yea, he alone knows the way who abides amidst the impurities of the world and yet remains detached and spotless.

Yoga consists not in words,
For he alone is a yogi who looks upon all men as equal ;
And dies while yet alive,
And hears the Unstruck Melody, and enters into the state of fearlessness ;

When one's doubt is dispelled, and cease the outgoings of the mind,
And nectar rains upon one' mind, and oozes the music of equipoise within one,
And one comes to know oneself.[11]

V

From Gorakhmata, Nanak came to Ayodhya (near Faizabad in east UP) where he asked people to give up idol-worship and to recite the true name, reminding people that Name was higher and greater than Rama, and that real Name is "unstruck melody." Reaching Allahabad, Nanak visited the confluence of Ganges and Yamuna and explained the significance of real confluence which was inside. The two rivers known here as Ganges and

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Yamuna are *Pingla* and *Ingla* or *Ira*. The three currents of the *Purush*, the *Prakriti* and *Akshar Purush* starting from the higher regions of *Brahamand* (*Sunn*) separated into 3 subtle currents known as *Ira*, *Pingla* and *Sukhmana*. The last occupies the middle position while *Ira* and *Pingla* are respectively on the left and right sides. These three currents intermingle (confluence) at the sixth ganglion (at the end of the nasal bone) and they are channels through which spirituality is supplied to the lower regions of *Brahamand*.

About the relevance of bath in holy rivers, Nanak expounded : "He who cometh to take bath in holy water with his mind full of deceit, and hands ever ready to steal, the outer dust may be washed away by bathing, but the inner dust is increased manifold, like a brass vessel polished from outside but full of poison inside. The true saints are pure, without bathing and thieves remain thieves even after bathing."

VI

From Allahabad, Nanak came to Varanasi and here he met Kabir and became his disciple. When Nanak reached Varanasi, Kabir had gone to a village, Raghunathpur. While Nanak began to move towards Raghunathpur, Kabir began to move towards Varanasi so that both met each other on the way. For several days, they held spiritual discussions. It is incorrect to say that Nanak was born after Kabir's death and that he could not have been Kabir's disciple. Kabir was born in 1398 and died in 1518. According to the authentic text of *Kabir Kasauti*, he went to Maghar in 1518 and left his mortal coil on the 11th day of the bright half of *Magh*. Nanak was born in 1459 and from 1459 to 1518 (for full 59 years) they were contemporaries.[12] Kabir taught Nanak the *Sahaja Yoga* or the practice of attending to the "unstruck melody". He was a ruthless critic of externalism and formalism in religion, taught his religion of love, which aimed at emotional integration of the soul with *Sat Purush*. This "simple union" (*Sahaja Yoga*) could be achieved by any aspirant regardless of caste, creed, or sex, not through idolatory and practices or rituals and austerities but through ardent personal devotion to God through the medium of a living master. It is these basic and fundamental tenets which Kabir taught Nanak and accepted and practised all his life.

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At Varanasi, Nanak met Chatur Das, priest of a Vishnu temple. He was intrigued by the sight of Nanak who was not even carrying a *Saligram* (the stone image of Vishnu—one of the Hindu Trinity). Nanak replied that he who waters barren land only wastes his life, and that one should make God the object of worship and right conduct the necklace of *Tulsi*. If you ride the boat of God's love with prayer in the heart for His grace, you will be ferried across. He who seeks to belong to the master of the garden makes deeds his well, the necklace and the waterpots, and yokes his mind, like an ox, to draw water from the well, and thus irrigates his farm with the Lord's nectar and fulfils himself :

O, Brahmin make God the image of thy worship,
And right living the necklace of *Tulsi*,
And sit in the boat of the God's Name and pray.
O, merciful God, be merciful to me,
Why thou watereth the barren land and wasteth thy life;
The mud wall thou buildeth shall fall,
Then why thou plaster it;
Fill thy mind with noble thoughts,
Make a raft of the sacred Name;
Become bountiful and cross the sea of life,
Make thy body like a Persian wheel,
Let thy mind be the bullock, yoked to run the wheels ;
Then irrigate thy mind with Nectar,
Let passion and wrath be thy weeder,
With them clear the farm of the weeds.
The deeper thou dig, thou shalt be happy,
And thy labour shall bear fruit.
O, God, if thou art merciful,
One becometh swan from a heron ;
Thus prayeth Nanak, the humble slave,
O, God, be Thou merciful to me.[13]

The Brahmin then asked, as to how one can overcome one's mind which is full of lust and wrath. Nanak replied that being nothing but energy, lust and wrath could be beaten into a ploughshare. A person can ride them by attending to the "unstruck melody" only. The force of the "unstruck melody" can change a crane into a swan. That is the secret method of receiving God's grace,

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which comes to all those who seek it in humility, through total self-surrender and knowledge of, and obedience, to the will of God.

Chatur Das then asked Nanak as to how knowledge could be obtained without learning. Nanak answered that knowledge is not merely intellectual comprehension because intellect is severely limited and does not reach beyond time and space. It cannot lead to wisdom. Both body and mind are too weak to resist the calls of desire (*kaam*), anger (*krodh*), craving or greed for possession (*lobh*), attachment (*moh*), and ego (*ahamkar*). And he added, that as long as one is controlled by these five passions which invariably travel together so that if one is there, the other four would also be there, sooner or later, there is no difference between the person who is learned and the other who is not. Learning, therefore, is not relevant to acquisition of wisdom which is the outcome of control of these five urges of mind. What, then, is the way to this control of mind, asked Chatur Das ? In reply, Nanak enunciated his famous doctrine of Logos or Word (*Shabd*) which had been developed by Maulana Rum and Kabir and later perfected by the illustrious founder of Radha Soami Faith, Sri Shiv Dayal Seth of Agra. This doctrine finds place in sections 8 to 16 of Nanak's Japji and other hymns.

In Sections 8, 9 and 10 of Japji, Nanak says :

Logos—audition to the numinousness of His Word,
What knowledge and perception of truth doth so emerge !
Wisdom and perfected learning of *Siddhas*, piety of *Pirs*, recall,
And the conception of various arts of Surs and Naths, all.
Geosphere of the earth, its support and spatiality of the sky,
Panaorama of continents, regions and nether regions, where they lie.
They that hearken and hear, the numinous Word of God,
Know and understand the aspects of Indra, firmament's Lord;
Brahma, as the Creator and Siva, the Destroyer of all,
In audition to His Word ; Yoga, secret of union with Him recall.
By hearing the Word, Divine knowledge is conveyed,
And praises emerge even from the lips of depraved,
And even the Vedas, Shastras and Smritis are so perceived,
Revelations, theology and scriptures, codes of law conceived,
And hearken now, behold the Word, its numinous call :

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Realization of absolute truth ; contemplation and knowledge all.
Nay, it is wisdom divine ; even merits of all bathing got,
Of all the known, such sixty-eight places that are sought
And then, even honours showered, the credit of scholastic mind;
Meditation and deep equiposed contemplation, of this kind.

The concluding lines of these stanzas are as follows :

And with the numinous Word, devotee burgeons forth sublime,
For all grief and moral wrong, truly, its destruction doth find,[14]

To obtain realization, Nanak presented and initiated a unique method which liberates a person from dependence on *granthas* or books but which makes listening to the Word basic to self-realization. (The Adi Granth was thus never "written" ; it was only "compiled" or at best "composed", not so much meant to be read but grasped as a dynamic functioning in its illumination, integrated with the Word). The Word is not the sound as heard by the physical ears but as heard by the Absolute Ear and stands for the subtle (*dhunyathmak*) sound as is heard by the practitioner of Word-audition. It is the impulse which was the first vibrant energy (*mauj*) that set the atomic structures in motion, and eventually its nucleus in electrons and protons etc. Hearing this Word unfolds all the secrets of creation and uncovers the stores of real knowledge that is wisdom :

In audition, the overwhelmingly and numerous virtues are fathomed and ocean deep of goodness is acquired, reaching even the heights of *Sheikh*, *Pir* and *Badshah* (sage, saint and king). Even the blind (deluded) find the road (ignorance is removed and divine path is seen). By hearing the Word, the depth of the world and ocean (of life) is known. The devotees blossom in perennial joy and by listening (to the *Shabd-Brahman*) their sorrows and sins are destroyed.[15]

Nanak insisted that the process of word manifestation is the cosmic consciousness accruing as a result of knowledge by identity with the Supreme in His undifferentiated condition, called the Name, to use Nanak's word. This super-ordinated centre of self enrichment is a process of synergesis or coordination, in the homophonic tendencies specifically wrought by vibratory impulse of sound and its aggregate superior "injectives", by virtue of convergence. The *par shabda*

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being extra-mundane, it is heard as *Pranava* (Om) being divinely instituted, in supplementation and extension of unbroken synthesis. Creative activity then asserts itself with amazing regularity and is refracted in essence through and to the receiving medium. The "integrational status" is then virtually activism towards comprehensive and composite process of realization—the essential unity arising from intuitive approach generated towards One Supreme Reality.

Then, Nanak was asked as to whether anyone can know the state of those who are in meditation ? He answered this question thus :

> The actual state of those who are in meditation (reflecting with belief in Him) cannot be described. (Those who are in subservience to His Command, become enlightened devotees). One who speaks or tries to describe that state of life, later on repents. No one can write or comprehend (the significance) of those obedient souls (in reflective meditation).
>
> Such is the (manner of revelation) of the name of *Niranjan*, pure and spotless. In obedience (the Name), is known and installed in the mind (which thus becomes illumined). [16]

So far, Nanak had dealt with the glorification of hearing the Word. Then, he refers to the faith in the Lord. It is not possible to describe adequately the importance of conforming to the pleasure of the Lord ; even if one ventures, one will cut a sorry figure. He says that by practising Word-audition internally, your mind (mana), *Surat* (the quintessence of divinity in man which is engaged in itself—*Swa*+*rat*) and intellect (*buddhi*) will be elevated to their appropriate spheres and you will come to know of the Invisible and gain knowledge of all the spiritual regions.[17]

It is said, Nanak says, that on death a sinner is dragged by the *Yama doot* (messenger of death) who tramples on his face all the way. But if a person practices control of mind through Word-audition, he will be beyond the realm of *Yama*. Such a name is *Niranjan* (*Nir* =without+*Anjan*=darkness ; without any blemish)[18] which only a few people recognize.[19]

Then, Nanak refers to the relationship between the Word, the Guru and the *Gurumukh* (disciple-in-chief). He who performs the

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practice of Word not only redeems himself but attaining the status of Guru, redeems His *Gurumukh* and through him other disciples. He is emancipated from the cycle of births and re-births.[20] Nanak then goes on to unfold the doctrine of five sounds which are honoured in the court of the Lord. These five sounds lend grace and splendour to the door of the beloved. By Word and Name Nanak means these very five sounds which are resounding all the time within every human being as different sounds with distinctive features, at different centres or spheres. But one will come to recognize them only when the Guru, in His mercy, is pleased to reveal them.

> He who showeth mansions within mansions is the all-knowing *Satguru*. Five different sounds are resounding as the distinctive features of their five respective spheres.[21]
>
> There, five sounds are loudly resounding. "Unstruck Melody" astonishing and wondrous, is reverberating.[22]
>
> Blessed is the home where the five sounds resound. The Lord Himself has manifested His power there. That blessed being has subdued the five evils and vanquished the vile Satan.[23]
>
> Within the head resonates the voice of the beloved. Close your ears and listen to the sound of joy and benignity. At the door of the Lord, cymbal is tinkling and kettledrum and clarionet are playing. The flute, the harp and the fiddle are producing harmony. The elegant beloved is dwelling in the city of 'Vrindavan', viz. the human body. Peep with rapt attention if you want to have a glimpse of the appearance of the beloved.[24]

And the Guru who reveals these five sounds is that Supreme Being and all the five are connected with Him.

If anybody wants to praise that Supreme Being and to know His whereabouts by thought and deliberation, he will not be able to do so, for infinite are the activities and powers of that Supreme Creator, and a human being will be at a loss to know which of them to praise.[25]

Bull (the mythical bull) is religion, and religion is the son

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of piety. In other words, religion is born of piety. Through contentment, religion is kept intact or in harmony.[26]

Whoever understands and appreciates this statement, truly finds access to the court of the Lord. If somebody says that the earth is supported on the horns of a bull, what a wrong and misleading statement would that be. For, how much weight could a bull bear and how long could it do so ? Further, if the earth is supported on the horns of a bull, the latter must be taking his stand on some land which, again, must be resting on a bull and the latter, standing on some land. So, there can be no end to this. For this reason, to say that the earth is supported on the horns of a bull, is totally wrong. The idea is to highlight the truth that the earth depends for its existence on piety and virtue.[27]

Men are born differently. They have all kinds of complexions and names. The lot of everybody is written by the hidden command of the Lord, which is preordained and which no one can know.[28]

If one wants to ascertain it, one cannot do so. Even if one were to know, how much can one really know, for there are countless things to be known.[29]

No one can guess how powerful is that Supreme Being, how beautiful is His form, and how great are His grace and mercy.[30]

That Supreme Being has created everything from one drop, out of which have emerged millions of fathomless oceans.

Which attribute of that Supreme Being shall I describe ? I cannot sacrifice myself even for once as a mark of my gratitude towards Him. O Lord ! Whatever Thou likest, is a good deed. Thou art, for all times, secure. Thou art absolute and incorporeal. The letters of the alphabet cannot describe Thee.[31]

When asked as to who can reveal the "unstruck melody". Nanak replied that it is only the living Guru who can reveal the secret of Name.

Through the Word of the Guru, one contemplates, as such,
On the Gospel of Lord ; quenching the fire of *Gurumukhs* search ![32]

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This makes the meaning very clear. The pupil is given spiritual wisdom and his intelligence reacts until a stage of understanding is reached. Consequently, the meaning and connotation of Brahm, changes with his perception ; from spirit to Universal Spirit, from intelligence to Universal Intelligence, and so forth. Reality then evolves itself through a process where the object evoked, through the Guru's Word, leads to the perception of the real object sought for (*Shabd Pratyaya*). The Guru's Word has, therefore, this valid and basic meaning.

And Lord's glory, through the feet of Guru, I joyfully sing,
In harmony with supreme bliss, that His Name doth bring ;
With the Guru's Word, verily the nectar became,
And I sacrifice myself to the final stage, The Name.
Sublime is the Lord, inwardly, he is sublime, within ;
When Guru gave me the mantra, through the ear, to hear of him.[33]

The significant word in the above lines is that through the Guru's Word, the Name was fully grasped. Then again the Guru gave the mantra to the ear, meaning the absolute ear "to hear of Him". The words "hear of Him" mean to understand the pervasiveness of God, functioning as cosmic totality :

Powerful is the Guru, and through his gift benign,
In uttering his Word, did I deliverance fully find;[34]
The mystery of universe, is understood by Creator alone,
Through Guru's Word, to cross the ocean of life is known.[35]

Again Nanak affirms :

Through the Guru's Word, I attained to the highest state (of bliss),
Yea, the Perfect Guru hath kept my honour safe ;
Through the Guru's Word, I dwell on the Name,
Through the Guru's Grace I attained peace;
Through the Guru's Word, I hear and utter with the tongue,
Through the Guru's Grace, nectar-sweet is my speech,
Through the Guru's Word, my ego hath gone;
Through the Guru's Word, great is my glory,
Through the Guru's Word, my doubts are dispelled,
Through the Guru's Word, I have seen the Lord in everything;

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Through the Guru's Word, I have attained the highest yoga.
Yea, in the company of the Guru are all men saved,
Through the Guru's Word, all my tasks are fulfilled;
Through the Guru's Word, I receive the nine treasures (of the Name).
He who rests his hopes in the Guru,
No more is the *Yama's* noose for him;
Through the Guru's Word my fate awakes,
And Nanak, on meeting the Guru, I meet the transcendent Lord.[36]

The modus of Nanak's argument is brought out from the following lines :

All ego is cast away within, with the Guru's Word,
This is the jewel of the Name, gathered by the mind inward;[37]
And blessed is the Word, revealing the Name of Lord,
By Guru's Grace, rare are those who know the Word of God.[38]
He utters the promise of Lord, who realises the will (Divine),
Through Guru's Word, he attains the glory of the Name (Sublime);[39]
And Nanak is blessed with the Grace of Lord,
Through Guru's Word, enshrined is the Name of God;[40]
Through Guru, real meaning of the Word came,
And reflecting truly on the Word, I loved His Name ![41]

The Word of the Guru has, however, been interpreted and taken to be synonymous with the Word of God, based on the logical argument that the Guru, representing the path of enlightener towards divine wisdom, was a commissioned instrument and, therefore, his Words, in effect, had the radiant energy of the Word of God.

The "natural stress" of a sound or word then represents a unified structure of a whole process which signifies it's attributes. *Om* signifies such a stress, the Cosmic totality and Universal Intelligence. To understand the thing denoted by the Word or Name is to understand the distinction between a secondary name and an expressed name, with an attribute of the Name or Word. This is Name meaning the natural and the attributive, achieved through a process called recitation and producing an awakening called realization.

Thus, Nanak explained to Chatur Das that Name is not merely

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a word denoting a pronoun, *ie*, there is no specific name of the entity referred to, although it may be called by any name or He may be given any Name—Nirankar or Brahm. Secondly, to name an object, as an act of differentiation, does not imply fully a qualitative or quantitative name. Thirdly, perception is not necessary through a language or letters. Supposing a flash of lightning is seen. It does not mean that the word lightning occurred first in the mind and then the flash; the flash was perceived by an impulse and all impulses are not from written letters alone, although letters as symbols are the only limited means available (the other means being impulses by sound or *ragas* in the scriptures).

With this discussion on what Name is not, let us come to what Name is. The answer is given by Guru Nanak in the immortal line *ieta keeta teta nao*—the sum total of Thy creation is Thy Name, with a causal stress on the Cosmic Word. The puzzle of creation cannot be explained in more befitting words.

VII

From Varanasi, in 1506, Nanak went to Gaya, the main centre where the Hindus make offerings of *Pinda* (obsequial cake) and *Deep* (lamps) to illuminate their ancestors' path in the heaven. When the priests asked Nanak to offer *Pinda*, he replied :

Lord's Name is my lamp and suffering the oil I put therein,
The more I burn my lamp, lesser becomes my suffering,
And then I do not suffer the pangs of death.
Lord's Name is my rice ball,
The leafy platters and the Creator's Name,
The true obsequies;
For, both here and hereafter,
The Name alone is my sustainer.
The Benaras and the Ganges are for me,
The singing of His praises,
In which my soul lives.
Some balls are offered to the gods,
But it is the Brahmin who eats them.
Instead, we must beg God,
To grant peace to our soul;
For nothing there is more than His love.[42]

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In the city, he found a rich merchant giving lavish banquet on the birth of a child, and then in deep mourning the next day at the child's death. Mardana asked Nanak about this sort of joy alternated by deep sorrow. Nanak's reply was that everything in the world must perish, that which has come or that which is yet to come. Why should, then, anyone feel happy at its coming and unhappy at its going ? All these are passing phases and happy or unhappy, one must remember that "even this will pass". Every one begins as an infant, becomes a child, adolescent, young, oldish and old; every day begins with the morning and ends in the night to begin again the next cycle in the morning. That is how the world's cycle runs. Once we understand this law, we will neither feel happy nor unhappy but will attain the state of poise. Legend again attributes to Nanak, a story which has been associated with numerous other sages—the story of two friends one of whom was a devotee of God and the other, a rascal. They were travelling together. The latter got on the way a pot full of gold coins, while the former got stuck with a poisonous thorn in his foot. The older version of the story is that the matter was referred to a saint who explained that the devotee in question was to die on the hangman's noose, but because of his devotion, his evil action's effect was reduced only to the hurt caused by a poisonous thorn. The rascal was to be crowned monarch of a kingdom, but by his evil deeds his reward was reduced only to a pot of gold. The version associated with Nanak is slightly different. It is said that when Mardana referred the issue to Nanak, the latter explained : "My son, ask thy heart if it feels contentment and bliss within, by sticking to the way of God; and ask also the other man if he has the same inner peace and poise, or burns ever in the fire of desire and lust. It is not one's affluence that makes for a happy and contented life, but what gives one's mind and heart stability and equilibrium. Your friend will grieve the moment his joys are snatched way, but you possess riches that would go not, nor be burnt nor drowned, and would stay with you. Men who go for the pleasures of the moment lose the joy of the everlasting."

Then, Nanak is supposed to have come to a village whose folk served him well. He blessed them : "May ye all scatter." At the next village, he received indifference and even discourtesy and Nanak blessed them : "May ye remain where ye are." Reacting to this, Mardana asked Nanak how come that "those who serve you, you

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want them to scatter, but those who treat you ill, you want them to stay in the security and happiness of their homes!" Now, Nanak's real explanation was that those who treat saints well must be emancipated from "attachment" to their hearths and homes and be scattered but those who are discourteous to them must remain tied down to the worldly bonds. But those who read in Nanak's metaphysics only the ideal of social service say that Nanak replied : "O, Mardana, if those that serve others scatter, they would, by their example, make others also likewise ; while if those that are inhospitable to the wayfarers, and the holy, stay where they did, at least they wouldn't corrupt others by their bad manners."

VIII

From Gaya, Nanak came to Patna where he is reported to have reclaimed the jeweller Salis Rai to spiritual causes. The story goes like this. Mardana discovered a jewel whose price he did not know. When he showed it to Nanak, he advised Mardana to go to the market and sell it. Mardana took it to dozens of people who refused to buy it because they did not know its value, until he met Salis Rai who was delighted to see the unique stone, whose price he said he was not in a posititon to pay. Salis Rai, however, gave Mardana a princely sum for just showing the rare stone. Mardana took it to Nanak and gave him the details. Nanak asked Mardana to understand that the worth of a jewel is known only to a jeweller not to ignorant people, and he directed Mardana to go back and return the money to Salis Rai. When Mardana met Salis Rai again, the latter was curious to know about Mardana's master who had returned the money. Salis Rai with his attendant, Adhuka, accompanied Mardana to see Nanak. As soon as Salis Rai saw Nanak he was transformed and both he and Adhuka were initiated by Nanak.

IX

From Patna, Nanak moved eastward to Dhabri in Assam, passing through Hajipur, Monghyr, Bhagalpur (Bihar), and Parbatipur. He visited Kamrup and halted at Dhanpur which had the famous temple of Kamakshi Devi and which was ruled by Queen Parbati, known as Nur Shah. Parbati acquired the name Nur Shah from a Muslim divine, Nur Shah, who cured her of a chronic ailment. In Kamrup she was known for black magic. From the place where Nanak rested, Mardana visited the city for eating and seeing the

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market. He came to the queen's palace where he was captured by her magic and charm and failed to return to Nanak for quite sometime. Nanak came searching for him and discovered him a virtual prisoner of Nur Shah. She refused to deliver Mardana and began to use her charming tricks even on Nanak who refused to be drawn towards her or her wealth. "She who sells dust", Nanak admonished her, "cannot exchange her goods with musk. Without worthy deeds, one finds not the true spouse." He added :

The virtuous women enjoyeth her husband,
But the bad woman bewaileth ;
If she becomes virtuous,
Then she too enjoys her spouse.
My spouse is living,
Why then I should enjoy with another.
If a woman becomes virtuous and her mind,
Is turned into thread;
She will string her spouse's heart thereon,
Like a priceless gem.
I ask for the way but walk not in it myself,
And yet I declare that,
I have already reached the destination.
If I do not speak with my spouse,
How then shall I be ushered into his presence?
Nanak, there is none except Him,
And if a woman is attached to her spouse,
She shall enjoy Him.[43]

Nur Shah then tried to entice Nanak by her dancing. Nanak said : "The desires of the heart clang like cymbals and the ankle-bells, and the world's drum beats with it to keep the time. Such are the times that even the sages dance to their tune. O God, where then are the men of continence to plant their feet ? All joys, all blessings, are bought and sold, but how long is one to enjoy and forsake his inner being and God ? Men are without compassion and kings without justice. Their appearance is human but their doings are of dogs. But he alone is approved who thinks himself. to be a guest in this garden of beauty and is not enticed away from God !"

When the queen and her companions persisted in their advances, Nanak told her : "O, ignorant women, why are you proud of your

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beauty, your riches ? Why not relish the Spouse of your heart within you, yea, He who is nearer than near, but Whom you searchest without and afar! Let His fear be the collyrium for the eyes and your decoration be of His love. But if you love Him not, and play clever with Him and try to please Him through courtesan manners and have greed in your mind, then you please Him not. If you surrender to His Will with all your heart, and be yoked ever to His Feet and offer your body and mind to Him, then your Lord loves and owns you as His very own. She alone is beauteous and meritorious and clever and wise who merges her whole being in her love."

This did it. Nur Shah and her friends twisted their headdresses around their necks in token of submission, and fell at the Guru's feet. They asked how they could obtain salvation. The Guru told them to repeat God's Name, conscientiously perform their domestic duties, renounce magic and secure future happiness. It is said that they became followers of Guru Nanak.

According to legend, Nanak and Mardana left Kamrup for Orissa. On the way, they met a wild and ferocious creature, half human and half-animal, and on being challenged by Nanak, he told him that he was *Kalyuga* who had come to warn him that he should abandon his spiritual effort of salvaging man. Nanak asked Mardana to play upon the rebeck and sang :

Were there a mansion of pearls inlaid with gems,
And perfumed with musk, saffron, fragrant aloes and sandalwood...
Were the earth to be studded with diamonds and rubies,
Were *houris* of exquisite beauty shining like a bead to please me with their delicate gestures;
I'd leave not the hand of my God,
Nor abandon the support of His Name !
Were I to become a *Siddha*,
Seated in a holy trance and work miracles;
And could become now manifest,
Now hidden, at will,
And people were to acclaim me for this,
I'd leave not the hand of my God,
Nor abandon the support of His Name !

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Were I to become a monarch,
Seated on a throne,
With large armies to obey my commands;
O, Nanak, all that would be vain like wind,
For, I'd ask God still to give me His Hand,[44]

X

Thereafter, in 1509, Nanak came to Puri (Orissa) where the priests and other devotees of *Jagannath* (Vishnu) performed *arti* (going round the idol of *Jagannath* with lighted earthen lamps in salvers of silver and with incense burning and flowers).

The sublime hymn in praise of Almighty and saturated with living consciousness, found expression here :

And lately, by the door of *Jagannath*, the temple great,
Stood Nanak, watching the *arti*, with offerings ornate ;
With incense and camphor, flowers and fumes,
Nanak, contemplating deep, stood amidst these perfumes.
Sweetly, sublimely did he sing ; he sang so well,
The inner voice of his, in the soul did dwell;
The heavens revolve, with luminous lights round Him,
The twinkling stars are pearls, *arti* with the hymn of His Greatness.
The incense are the winds that fan,
The incense from the hearts of many, many million men;
And hear the rapturous, endless music divine,
Resounding again and again, in human ears supine;
Omni-present and all-perceiving, is the ubiquitous God,
Unlike the mortal man, so gorgeous is mighty Lord.
Sans mundane limb, yet perceives like million lights,
Sans occult pair of legs, yet sustains to billion heights;
Great God, I thirst for Ye, Thy presence,
Is all the perfume of life, and its incense;
Ever-effulgent and emitting the light of life,
And with Thy radiance, He makes the stars burn bright.
I dedicate my *arti*, soul of life, everything, all,
To the soul of everything, with no withdrawal.
As Thou Willeth, events their marking take,
As Thou lighteth, with light divine, day-light breaks !
By Thy Glorious beams, the stars are bright,

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So does the soul, rising to sublime height;
And this I know well, when the Master came,
Divine light is revealed, verily with his Name.
At Thy lotus-feet, Lord, the thirsty soul compose,
Take me to Thy holy feet, take me there to repose ![45]

When asked to join the *arti* at Jagannath temple, Nanak explained the meaning of the term. *Arti*, he said, means to get absorbed or merged into the Lord (*Aa*=come+*rat*=get merged). Elaborating the concept, he said that it refers to the ascent and journey of the spirit entity upward towards the region of pure spirituality, through deep love and yearning, true humility and total surrender to the will of the supreme creator. It refers to intense devotion to the living preceptor who then helps the devotee in elevating his soul to higher regions. He sang a hymn :

The sky is the salver,
The sun and the moon are the lamps,
With the spheres of stars studded in it like jewels.
The sandalwood on the Malai mountain,
Scatters its fragrance across,
And the winds waft the scents,
Of all the flowers of the earth.
Thus is Thy worship performed,
O, Thou destroyer of fear.
The Unstruck Melody of Thy Word,
Ringeth through all Thy universe.
Thousands are Thy eyes,
Yet hast Thou eyes ?
Thousands Thy forms,
Yet hast Thou a form ?
Thousands Thy feet,
Yet hast Thou feet ?
Thousands Thy noses to smell,
Yet hast Thou a nose, O wonder of wonders ?
Thou art the light that lights all hearts,
And becomes manifest through the instruction
Of the Guru.
O man, that alone is worship,
Which pleases my God !
Like the black bee,

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My mind craves for
The honey of His lotus feet,
And cries :
"O, God, bless Nanak, Thy cuckoo,
With the rain of Thy mercy,
That he merges in Thy Name !"[46]

The priests, of course, refused to understand what Nanak was seeking to convey and left him alone. Later, he met a Brahmin who used to keep his eyes and nose closed and claimed that by his yogic powers he could reveal the secrets of others. Nanak then took away the jug of water lying in front of the Brahmin and put it at his back and asked him as to where the jug was. The pretender failed to locate it. This led Nanak to wonder :

Men know not the spirit of the times,
Nor the essence of yoga,
Nor the way of truth.
The holy places have been corrupted and defiled,
Lo, the whole world is drowned thus!
In the *Kali* age,
The way to man's release is through God's love;
In vain do men hold their nose,
And close their eyes and claim,
That they see the three worlds,
But they see not what's behind them,
O, what a miracle is this ?[47]

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4

NANAK'S JOURNEYS : 1510-1531

By the end of 1509, Nanak had returned to Sultanpur, after his prolonged tour of 12 years, to the delight of his sister and brother-in-law. From there he went towards Talwandi and halted under a shady tree about 3 miles away from it, and despatched Mardana to meet his parents. Nanak's mother Tripta anxiously enquired of her son's welfare and accompanied Mardana to the spot where he had halted. He was meditating and as soon as he saw his mother, he touched her feet. Tripta asked him to discard the mendicant's robes and put on the new clothes of a householder. Soon, his father Mehta Kalu, also came and offered his horse to his son and asked him to go to the new house he had built for him.

II

Nanak was, however, firm in his resolve to pursue his spiritual mission and told his parents that he had come only to keep his promise to them. Leaving them again, he reached Pakpattam to pay homage to the shrine of the great Sufi Saint of the 13th century, Sheikh Farid-ud-din Ganj Shakar, also the son-in-law of Sultan Balban. Some of the teachings of Sheikh Farid were later incorporated in the Adi Granth compiled by the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev. The shrine of Baba Farid was now held by Sheikh Ibrahim. Seeing Nanak in the householder's garb, Ibrahim mused :

Either one should covet the world or God,
But one must place not one's feet in two boats,
Lest one be drowned!

Nanak answered :

Why not make use of both :
Have one's goods in one,
And one's soul in the other.
For such a one,

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There's no wreck, no loss;
Neither one sees the boat,
Nor the water !
He cherishes only the goods of God,
Which is true and pervades all,
All-too-spontaneously.[1]

Nanak and Ibrahim discussed various subtle points. Ibrahim remarked : "The whole world is enamoured of the 'witch' which is false from within, and as one looks on, one's 'farm' is ruined!" To which Nanak replied : "Men have been in love with the 'witch' since the beginning of time. But he who keeps a watch over his 'farm' will never see it ruined."[2] Ibrahim said : "My strengh is gone, my mind is torn, my body ceases to function. O love! Bring me a medicament that may cure me of my ailment."[3] Nanak told him : "Thy physician is truth, and is within thee, not without! To utter Him or to call Him from without is false ; one must realise Him within one's soul."[4] Ibrahim cried : "When there was time to construct a boat, I didn't ! And, now when the river is in flood, how can I carry myself across ? O love ! Touch not the safflower, its colour will fade away. The soul is weak and the command of the Beloved hard to bear. As the cow once milked yields not again, so also our single life. The call from beyond calls, and the swan-soul is sad that it hath to pass and the dust return to dust."[5]

Nanak hopefully advised : "If one constructs the boat of meditation and self-discipline, the crossing is easy enough. Then, one meets not with an angry river, and the path is smooth. He who gathers merit in his skirt, the God, of Himself, owns him and forsakes never, if he gives up ego and evil."[6]

The Sheikh agreed but said : "The tree of life yields flower in the first part of the night, and it fructifies in the morning. And he alone is blessed who keeps awake through the night."

Nanak left it to God : "The bounties are in the hands of God, the Giver. Some He passes by, even though they are awake; others He wakes up out of sleep and blesses. If man were to receive bliss only as a result of his own effort, what need then is there of God and His Grace ? Effort one must make, but the fruits thereof must be surrendered to God. Only thus does one's ego depart and one

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merits the Grace of God, Else, the realm of the spirit also degenerates into a market place of give-and-take."[7]

Nanak sang the hymn :

When Thou, O God, art with me,
I have everything;
For, Thou, O love, art my capital-stock.
When I abide within Thee,
I'm at peace and feel blessed;
In Thy Will Thou blessest man with a throne and glory,
In Thy Will Thou makest man a beggar, sad at heart;
In Thy Will do rivers flow across the deserts,
In Thy Will doth the lotus flower in the (mind's) sky,
In Thy Will do we cross the impassable sea (of material existence),
In Thy Will are we drowned in the midstream,
In Thy Will Thou seemest pure and beauteous,
And one is imbued utterly with Thy praise;
In Thy Will Thou seemest dreadful,
And one exhausts oneself coming and going.
O Love, Thou art unfathomable, incomparable, without an equal;
And saying thus, I surrender myself to Thee.
O God, I ask nought from Thee, but for Thy vision I crave.[8]

Nanak also advised the Sheikh not to starve himself if he felt hungry : "It is a sin to deny oneself the necessities of life. One must not crave for pleasures, but whatever comes from God one must accept with good grace and thankfulness. Starvation never leads to spiritual bliss."[9] Quoting Kabir he added : "He who forsakes bread and pretends God's love, has, neither the merit of a wedded spouse nor of a chaste widow." Without a well nourished body, Nanak said, "God could not be realized." Spiritual ascent is made possible not by starvation but by self-surrender, contentment, compassion and humility :

Come, my sisters and beloved ones,
Come and embrace me!
And let us talk about Omnipotent Lord ;

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True master hath all the merits,
And we all the vices.
O Creator! everybody is in Thy power;
Remember the one word, where Thou art,
What more is required.
Go and ask the happy wife by what merit,
She enjoyed her husband:
Composure, contentment and sweet humility,
Are my ornaments.
I meet Thee only when I hear the Guru's word,
How great is Thy power !
How great Thy gifts!
How many men and animals speak
Thy greatness day and night !
How many are Thy forms !
How many castes high and low !
When one meets the great Guru,
Then truth is revealed and through that
One mergeth in the True One ;
When one is filled with fear by Guru's words,
One obtains understanding and is honoured;
And, Nanak, then the True King uniteth man with Himself.[10]

III

From Pakpattam, Nanak and Mardana left for Sayadpur. On the way they passed through a desert where Mardana felt hungry. Nanak asked him to eat the wild berries to satisfy his hunger but instructed him not to keep any for the morrow. Mardana, however, disregarded the Guru's instructions and kept some berries in his pocket. He ate them the next day when he felt hungry again. This caused him pain in the belly. When Nanak came to know of this he told Mardana : "That's how man suffers. He not only demands what he needs now, but also what he needs for the morrow, depending not on God but on himself. And the food he thus accumulates and deposits, gets stale, even if it is not stolen, or gives rise to jealousy in the minds of others. And, so whosoever feeds himself on the leftovers suffers."[11]

On the way, he also met a leper who had been discarded by society and was living outside the village. The leper was amazed to

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see Nanak asking for a shelter with "this wretch of circumstance of life". Nanak spoke thus :

> Lonely, fate despoilt man, lift thy downcast eyes !
> See, behold the sun, it will illumine the gloomy skies !
> The birds of passage, sit on a twig awhile ;
> As travellers we met, and lo ! the bird did swiftly fly.
> Hark, see, the fleeting bird of *time* on its wings!
> Remembering the twig, in all directions she sings ;
> And softly all suffering is forgotten to cease in Him,
> In the music and melody of His Name, what eternal Spring.[12]

The leper asked Nanak as to the cause of disease. Nanak replied : "By forgetting God. For, the malady is not in our body but in our souls. While man can cure his body's ailments, only God can cure our souls. He whose soul is in health, minds not the body's pain; but he who leans only on the body, keeps his soul ever in pain."[13]

Reaching Sayadpur, in 1510, he met his old devotee, Bhai Lalo, to whom he revealed the secret of the coming invasion of Babar (see Chapter I).

IV

From Sayadpur he came to Sialkot, via Pasrur. There, resting under a wild caper tree, he gave an anna (then 16th part of a rupee) to Mardana and asked him to go to the market and buy "truth" worth half-an-anna and "falsehood" for the rest. Checking at every shop but failing to make the deal, Mardana came to a shopkeeper known as Moola who told Mardana that "life of the self" is "false", but death in the way of God is "true". Mardana reported this to Nanak who got interested in Moola's reply and invited him to be his companion. Moola remained with Nanak for some time but eventually lost interest in spiritual pursuits. Legend has it that Moola died soon after, bitten by a snake.[14]

His sojourn at Sialkot is also known for his confrontation with a Muslim sufi, *Pir* Hamza Gaus, who was famous for his occultism and who used to distribute amulets and charms to the people. One resident of Sialkot had prayed to Gaus for a few sons, the first of

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whom he promised to offer to him. He got three sons but refused to honour his part of the contract so that Gaus threatened the whole city with destruction. On seeing the people in panic, Nanak interceded and sent for him but he refused to come. He offered to go to meet him but the *Pir* declined to give an appointment. Nanak then guaranteed safety to the people of Sialkot so that the doomsday never arrived. Gaus was exposed and he came down to see Nanak and repent. Nanak then initiated him in his system and accepted him as one of his disciples.[15]

V

From there, Nanak went to Kotla Mian Mittha or Mitthankot (in Pakistan) which derived its name from the famous Muslim sufi, Mian Mittha, who in his arrogance had promised to his followers that he would "squeeze Nanak dry like a lemon." The Mian in his first meeting with Nanak exclaimed : "O Nanak ! There are only two things which if a man accepts, he's approved by God : One, God Himself and the, other, the Prophet. But you accept not the second, nor read the Quran. How are you then to be redeemed ?" Nanak replied : "It is the Quran of Right Conduct that I read, and as I live in God, I lean not on another. For, he who is in love with the One, loves not another."[16]

Mian Mittha compared the Quran with oil of wisdom and asked Nanak how could the lamp of the body be lighted with oil (the Quran). Nanak replied : "The (body's) lamp, if in it be the oil of wisdom, and the wick be of God's fear, and if it be lighted with the torch of Truth, its light illumines us within, and we see God. Yea, he who while he liveth serveth others, he getteth a seat in the presence of God."[17]

Nanak, replying to the other questions raised by Mian Mittha pointed out that "to love is to be wise ; to surrender to love, in all humility, is to fear God ; to believe in love is to light the torch, and to know that He alone is everyone and everything is to know the only Truth one ought to know. The glamour of illusion is hard to penetrate and the only way to escape from it and reach God is to submit to His Will (*Mauj* or *Bhana*).[18]

From Mitthankot, Nanak came to Lahore where he corrected the multi-millionaire, Duni Chand, from his evil ways. He had plan-

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ted hundreds of flagstaffs on his door, each flag symbolizing a thousand of rupees he possessed. He was performing *Shradh* (the offering of water, food etc. to the Brahmins in honour of manes) for his dead father and invited Nanak to partake of the feast. Nanak consented to go there provided Duni Chand agreed to take from him a needle and deliver it to him in the hereafter. Duni Chand thought it crazy and told Nanak so, to which the latter replied that it was indeed crazy but so was what Duni Chand was doing to please his father who was no more.

The *Janam Sakhis* have it :

Unto a wealthy rich Khattri, Dunni Chand by name,
Was given a needle, to be returned in the next world again.
The Khattri asked : "How can I carry this needle after death?"
Nanak replied : "What use is then, the millions thou hath ?"[19]

That had the desired effect on him. He asked Nanak as to whether anything goes with a dying person. Nanak said :

Nanak, one gets only in the next world,
What one earns here through honest living,
And shares it with others.[20]

Duni Chand gave away most of his wealth in charity and accepted Nanak's path.

VI

Coming to the bank of Ravi, Nanak founded a township called as Kartarpur (Kartar=Maker or God) on a a piece of land gifted by a landlord. Here a boy of seven began to see Nanak everyday. When he asked him the reason of his coming to him, the boy replied : "I have seen my mother lighting firewood. And it is the little sticks that burned first. That made me realize that one knows not when the flame of one's life is extinguished. One must start on the God's way soon enough, and not wait for old age !" This boy came to be known as the *Buddha Baba* (the revered old one) in recognition of his maturity even at the tender age of seven.[21]

At Kartarpur, Nanak started farming and the food thus produced was used to run a community-kitchen called as *langar* at which everyone was free to come and eat with others. When a Brahmin

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sought to observe his restrictive kitchen rules, Nanak told him that "it is not through food that we are defiled, but through an evil mind.' When two of his disciples, Malo and Bhago, asked him as to the spiritual value of penances, he replied : "To practise penances is to reject the goodness of God. If we put to deliberate pain the body which is the temple of God, how are we to please Him ? One should burn one's craving, not one's body. The mind can be steadied not by tearing it away under compulsion from the activity of life, but by yoking it to God in whatever one does. Holy is he whose mind is holy, who does injury to no one, and serves everyone, minding not the coat he wears and remaining humble and giving up desire even in the midst of the work-a-day world."[22] It was here that Nanak composed his famous Bara Maha iu which he anticipated Mira Bai's love for God, like a wedded spouse pining for her lord who has gone abroad.

He now decided to go south and took along two Jat companions, Saido and Gheeo who, according to legend, saw the god of water in a vision. The god told him that while he was water, Nanak was the air in which water is contained. Both of them decided to follow Nanak's path.[23] This, again, appears to be a figment of imagination invented to impress people with the spiritual splendour of Nanak. While going to south, Nanak crossed Rajasthan visiting Bhatinda, Sirsa, Bikaner, Ajmer, Pushkar, Abu, Bider, and Ujjain (in Madhya Pradesh). In the south, he halted at Pongal, Anainapur, Godapa, Madras and then visited Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). On his way back he stayed at Kanya Kumari, Najapattam and Rameshwaram. This took him nearly four years (1510-1514).

VII

In Bikaner (Rajasthan) he came across a Jain temple headed by Narbhi who asked him by what means he got his food : by taking old corn or new, or by shaking trees to get food or by destroying life in any way. Nanak replied : "From water came the fourteen gems ; on the river-banks are all the Hindu places of pilgrimage ; water washes us clean ; how can one despise the cool, flowing water, which gives life to us all ? As for destroying life, is there anything that is without it ? Flowers and leaves have life, so has water corn, milk and curds. It is through wisdom that one is emancipated, not by shunning food that God has blessed us with, in any form."

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Nanak added :

God alone giveth life and He destroyeth,
None else can give life;
So whosoever liveth without a wash,
And charity to others.
Out of the water emerged the fourteen gems ;
On the river banks are all the sixty-eight
Hindu places of pilgrimage ;
Prayers are offered after a bath in water,
And every worship is preceded by a bath ;
At birth as at death men are washed with
Water for the peace of their souls;
But the bald-headed ones,
Led by devils are not pleased with it !
When it raineth, there is happiness all round ;
In water lies the key of all life,
It is the water of the rains
That maketh food grow ;
And the cotton is grown which giveth to all a cover;
Rains maketh possible for cows to graze grass,
And for a house-wife to churn curds;
From churning, ghee is made which propitiates,
The sacred fire, and with which,
The *Yajnas* and other worships are performed.
The Guru is the sea, and his disciples streams,
By bathing in the sea,
The glory is achieved,
But, Nanak, if the bald-headed ones bathe
Not there, let dust be on their heads.[24]

On way to south, he met a Muslim Sufi, *Pir* Makhduru Bahauddin Qureshi, who was a miracle performer and had built up a large following. He was arrogant and treated people badly. Nanak admonished him for his arrogance and told him that the way of God is the way of humility. He who becomes fond of his own praise, loses God. He added :

The man who does not remember God,
Attaches himself to the world's filth ;
He receives a hundred reproaches by day,
And a thousand by night.[25]

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When Qureshi requested Nanak to stay with him a little longer, He replied :

Who can stay at a place,
When nothing stays ?
I would stay only,
If that, where I am,
Were to stay with me;
Yea, God alone stays,
So, I'd bide with Him ;
For, the world stayeth not;
Nor the sky, nor day, nor night,
Nor moon, nor sun, nor do the stars,
Nor kings, nor *pirs*, nor angels,
Nor ascetics, nor men, nor books, nor rituals;
Yea, God alone stayeth, or His Word ![26]

At Ujjain, where he stayed at the house of an untouchable, some high born caste Hindus objected. Nanak reminded them that "hereafter strength and caste are of no value, for every soul is new."[27] On way to Sri Lanka, he confronted the cannibals headed by Kanda. According to legend, Kanda was transformed as soon as he saw Nanak and fell at his feet. Nanak told him :

When the Master shows mercy,
We act according to His Will ;
And the true servant is he whom He maketh,
For whosoever submits to His Will,
Gets the Lord's place !
Who followeth the commands of the Master,
Gets his heart's desire ;
In the God's court he is honoured ![28]

At Avanda, Nanak met Nam Dev. Then he crossed into Sri Lanka where he was received by King Shivanabham, perhaps the chieftain of Jaffna which was then one of the three independent states of Sri Lanka and was populated by Saivite Tamils as against the Buddhists of Kotte and Kandy. The Sri Lankan legends record the visit of *Nanakacharya* to King Dharmaprakamabahu who headed the kingdom of Kotte in 1493-1530 and who was fond of holding religious discourses with learned people. Earlier, a jeweller, Mardana

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of Lahore, had been approached by Nanak's attendant, Bhagirath, and through whom he had reached Nanak and had accepted his faith. It is said that as soon as Nanak saw Mansukh, he had remarked : "This Mansukh was immature in devotion (*bhakti*) earlier. Now he wants to perform *bhakti* after becoming sincere and true by Name's greatness. So I took him into my fold. Glory to the saint who makes insignificant man equal to Him."[29]

VIII

It is this Bhai Mansukh who had reached Sri Lanka on business before Nanak reached the emerald island. King Shivanabham was a Saivite and he did not like Mansukh reciting Nanak's hymns and his practice of recitation and meditation as prescribed by Nanak, to the neglect of performance of rituals and rites. The king subjected him to interrogation to which Bhai Mansukh replied : "O King ! This world is like a tree carrying on its top the fruit of salvation. There are two ways of getting at that fruit ; one, by flying to it like a bird, and the other by reaching it at an ant's pace. He, who is fortunate enough to meet the preceptor, gets the fruit without much labour and toil. But it would be extremely difficult for a person who has not met him to obtain that fruit.

"You undertake the 'Ekadashi' fast (fast on the eleventh day of each half of a lunar month) once in a fortnight. Thus, you and others have fixed only one day for shunning evil tendencies like passion and anger as well as for eating sparingly and keeping awake. But this kind of abstinence is resorted to by saints everyday and passion, anger, etc. have no sway over them.

"If one bathes at night, it is all the more beneficial. The benefit of taking bath three hours before dawn is as great as that accruing from giving gold in charity. If one bathes an hour or two before dawn one derives the same benefit as that obtained on giving silver in charity. He who takes his bath about half an hour before dawn and one who bathes early in the morning enjoys the fruits of giving, respectively one and a quarter maund (50 kg) of milk and a maund (40 kg) of water charity. A person who takes his bath during day-time does not derive any benefit save that of washing away dirt from his body.

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"A stone idol neither eats nor drinks, nor gives instructions. There can be no hope of deriving any benefit from its worship. As far as I am concerned, I only worship my merciful Master whose discourses, like the sun, dispel the darkness of ignorance. He has enabled me to taste the fruit of redemption by appraising me of the method of flying like a bird. How can I give up that method and accept such worthless practices as observance of rites and rituals, fasts, idol worship, etc. which are no better than the ant's method of trying to get at the fruit hanging atop ? By dint of such practices only some internal purification is possible but, as far as redemption is concerned, that can be achieved only by the benign glance of the preceptor and his instructions. He, by placing his hands of mercy on my head, has graciously imprinted the *tilak* mark of his word on it. I do not have to apply the *tilak* mark on my forehead again and again as you people do. I only want that my Guru's hands of mercy may rest on my head all the time."[30]

The king was reportedly moved and stirred in his depths. He sought to meet Nanak : "Enable me, please to meet the Guru as soon as possible. That will be doing great good to this humble fellow. I shall now go with you, leaving everything. By seeing the Guru I shell dispel all delusion and, on receiving initiation from Him, shall attain the highest region. I cannot find any peace now without seeing the Great One whose discourses have pierced deep my heart."[31]

Bhai Mansukh told the king : "If you come with me on my journey back home, you will be able to see the Guru after a long time. Therefore, stay here and remain constantly engaged in his remembrance. He is in the know of whatever transpires within the innermost recesses of anyone and His devotees are very dear to him. He will fulfil your heart's desire shortly".[32]

The king accepted Mansukh's advice and continued to repeat *Satnam* (True Name) and his longing to meet Nanak went on increasing. It was then that Nanak arrived. Shivanabham wanted to be doubly sure about the newly arrived saint's credentials. He asked Nanak as to his name, caste and whether he was a yogi. Nanak replied : "A yogi is he whose interior is cleansed with the discipline of God's love, and who is ever imbued with His Truth and whose comings and goings are ended. O God, what is Thy name, Thy

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caste ? When Thou call me into Thy presence, I would ask Thee to answer the doubts of my mind."[33]

The king asked him if he was a Brahmin. Nanak answered : "A Brahmin is he who bathes in the waters of God's wisdom and knows the One alone whose light permeates the three worlds." The king then asked him if he was a Khattri shopkeeper. Nanak replied : "My tongue is the beam, my heart the scale, and I weigh therewith the Essence of the Unknown. There is but one shop, and one merchant, and the customers too are all of the same type."[34]

When asked if he was a Hindu or a Muslim, he said : "The true preceptor has resolved the differences of the two ways for him who is yoked to the One alone ; he cherishes His Word and dispels his doubt." Then, the king asked him as to the nature of a true godman. Nanak answered : "The man of God lives in a state of superconsciousness, a void it is, where there's neither joy nor sorrow, hope nor desire, caste nor castemarks, no sermons, no hymning of hymns ; seated in himself, man meditates, composed like the sky and knows himself."[35]

With folded hands, the king then stood up before Nanak, intently looking at his forehead and eyes. For about 8 hours, he remained standing, gazing at the form of Nanak. Then, Nanak asked him as to what he wanted. The king replied : "Full of love and with choked voice I say while singing Thy praise : Blessed are my life and good luck that I have seen you. O Lord ! Thou art aware of my inner feelings, O the knower of the innermost recesses of all ! No man can recognize Thee or sing Thy praise adequately."[36]

He then blessed the king : "Thy devotion is approved by God." The king accepted Nanak's way of God realization.

IX

In 1514, Nanak returned to India and went to Kartarpur where his family was settled. In 1515, he visited Achal Babla and there he met some yogis who were adherents of Gorakhnath. Their leader Bhangarnath, on seeing Nanak in the dress of a householder asked him : "O boy, why have you made the 'milk' sour and wear the robes of a householder, claiming to be an ascetic. No butter (of wisdom) is thus churned."

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Nanak replied : "He whose 'mother' (the Guru) is unwise, makes the 'milk' sour by washing not the 'churn' (signifying the body). He who abandons family life and curses it, should not go out to beg at the door of the householders. He who does nothing here, will get nothing hereafter."[37]

The yogis then asked him to perform some miracles to prove his bonafides as a saint. Nanak gave a discourse on the insignificance of miracles : "All miracles are a negation of God. I believe in no miracle but God and the companionship of the holy. Were I to put on the dress of fire, bide in a house of snow and eat iron, and eschew all my pain, and drive the earth before me, and weigh the whole firmament with a mere trifle, and perform the impossible, all that would be vain, if God blesses me not with His Grace and the joy of ever living in Him."[38]

The yogis are reported to have offered him a cup of liquor which could induce a state of super-consciousness. Nanak refused, arguing : "He who has the knowledge of the divine, and meditates upon it, and does only what is good, and loves God, keeps ever intoxicated." When asked as to the definition of a hermit, he explained : "He who with the "sword' of wisdom wrestles with the five passions and knows how the ten organs of action and five of perception function, whose mind is ever filled with the divine, and who makes pilgrimages within all the year round, and washes the pride of his heart, is indeed, a hermit."[39] When invited to join the Gorakhnath sect of yogis in the interest of his deliverance, he quietly pointed out : "Not through a patched coat, nor earrings, nor wallet, nor staff, nor a deer's horn can one become a true yogi. For me, he alone is a yogi who controls his five passions, sleeps little and eats but sparingly, and is devoted to God, restrained in desire, uttering wisdom, thus making his body and mind holy, and accepting as good whatever comes from God. Then the "unstruck melody" of God's Word will fill one's being."[40]

In 1516, Nanak journeyed through Mansarovar, Tibet, China, Kashmir, Ladakh and Jammu, accompanied by Hassan (a smith) and Sihan (a calico printer). He lived on fruits and blossoms of some trees, and on his feet and head he had a skin and his body was wrapped up. On his forehead he had a saffron mark of flame. At

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Mattan near Srinagar on the advice of Kamal, a Muslim, sage a reputed Brahmin Brahm Das, came with donkey loads of Sanskrit books and with a stone idol around his neck, to cross swords with the Saint of Talwandi. On seeing this pile of books, Nanak exclaimed :

One may read thousands of books,
With cartloads of books to follow ;
One may read for generations and generations,
And spend every month in the year studying ;
And one may read his entire life,
Right up to his last breath ;
But, Nanak, there is one truth only,
All else is vanity and vexation of the egoistic mind.[41]

When the pandit asked him as to why was he wearing leather which was forbidden to holy men, and why was he twisting a rope around his waist, if he was a religious preceptor, Nanak told him that he never claimed to be a "Guru" or a "Saint". But dress was not related to one being a saint or not ; he only believed that "there is but one road that leads to the only door. The true Guru's wisdom teaches everyone that way." He added :

There's but one road that leadeth to the one door,
The true Guru teacheth everybody the way ;
Nanak, the wonderful Lord resideth there and all joy is in His Name !
The God Himself createth and knoweth Himself ;
He separateth the earth from the sky and spreadeth a canopy over it;
He fixeth the sky without any pillars through His Will,
He createth the sun and the moon, and infused light into them,
He maketh day and night, How wonderful are His powers !
Pilgrimage, religion, meditation and bathing on holy days ;
None compares to thee, O Lord, how can I describe Thee !
Thou sitteth on the true throne, all others come and go.[42]

Brahm Das then asked him as to who created the universe. Nanak replied

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Thou art true, O God,
Thou hast manifest truth ,
Thou art absorbed in Thyself,
Hiding Thy source ;
Even the great Brahm knew not Thy end,
Thou hast neither father,
Nor mother, who gave thou birth ;
Thou hast neither form nor feature,
Nor any caste ;
Thou hast neither hunger,
Nor thirst, and yet thou goest about !
Thou art merged in the Guru,
And revealest Thy word through him.
By pleasing the True one,
One mergeth in Him.[43]

And, then the pandit asked him as to the process of creation and what there was in the beginning. Nanak replied :

In the beginning was utter darkness,
And chaos upon chaos;
Then, there was neither earth,
Nor heaven, nay nothing;
But God's indescribable
And wondrous Will ;
Neither day there was,
Nor night, nor sun, nor moon,
Only God reflecting on Himself
In the Void ;
There was neither wind nor water,
Nor the sources of creation,
Nor speech there were;
Neither creation there was,
Nor destruction;
Neither coming nor going ;
No seas,
There were no rivers,
No continents, no hells, no paradise;
No world, no underworld there was ;
Nor Brahma, nor Siva, nor Vishnu,
But my only God !

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No rituals there were,
Nor penances, nor the sacred books,
No incantations, nor charms;
Nor the many, many ways ;
No caste then was,
Nor pride, nor death; nor life,
Nor man, nor soul; no subject, no king ;
And when and how He pleased,
He created the world
And all we see and believe.[44]

When Nanak asked the pandit to have someone as his guru, he asked Nanak as to who could be that ? "I know everything I ought to know", Brahm Das said, "who can be my Guru ? Nanak asked him to a house where four sages lived and said that they would direct him to where his Guru was. The pandit went to the place and the four sages advised him to go to a temple where his Guru was present. On reaching there, Brahm Das saw a nude beauty who insulted him, instead of welcoming. The pandit reported back to the sages who revealed : "This woman is Illusion (*Maya*). Your heart is in her, and that is why your mind is turbulent." This took the pandit back to Nanak for instruction. Nanak advised him that learning is not wisdom, that wisdom, comes through experience (*anubhav*) and experience through spiritual discipline which, if disinterested and grounded in humility, invokes the Grace of God.[45] Brahm Das eventually became a disciple of Nanak.

X

Then, Nanak travelled through the northern region (Uttarakhand) and visited Nurpur, Sujanpur, Kot Kangra, Jwalamukhi Devi, Dalhousie, Dharamsala, Manikaran, Rawalsar, Nadoun, Bilaspur, Kahlur, Kirtipur, Maha Shiv Shil, Dehradun, Mussourie, Chakrata, Uttar Kashi, Yamunottari, Gangottari, Srinagar, Badri Narain, Bhim Kot, Ranikhet, Almora, Nainital, Gorakhpur, Khanchi Jheel, Mansarovar, Dhavlagiri, Nepal, Sikkim, Kanchan Junga, Bhutan and so on. At Mount Sumeru, he met some *siddha*. A *siddha* is a semi-divine person supposed to have acquired eight supernatural powers and resides in the middle regions between the earth and the sun (the *Bhuvar Lok*). The eight magical faculties are : *animan*—the power of becoming as small as an atom; *mahiman*—the power of increasing size at will; *laghiman*—the power of assuming excessive lightness at will ; *gariman*—the power of making

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oneself heavy or big at will ; *prapti*—the power of obtaining anything from anywhere ; *prakamya*—irresistible will-power ; *ishitva*—superiority or greatness ; and *vashitva*—the power of subduing or overpowering. The *siddhas* asked Nanak : "What power has brought you here ?" They also asked him in what state he had left the country and how the people lived ?[46] Nanak replied :

Most humbly I worshipped,
The Omnipotent Lord with love,
Who is the source of all power ;
By His grace I have been able
To climb to such heights ![47]

As to the state of the country, Nanak said :

The Kali age is the knife,
Kings are butchers,
And justice has taken wings ;
The darkness of falsehood is abroad,
And one knows not where rises,
The moon of Truth ;
The subjects are blind, and submissive,
Being unwise and live on falsehood ;
The teachers dance to the tune of disciples,
The Qazis do justice if their palm is greased;
And what bind men and women
To each other is greed, not love.[48]

And then, he added :

Darkness of untruth had shadowed the moon of truth,
In this dark night of sheer falsehood,
I am discovering the truth ;
Sin stalks the world,
And the bull of dharma
Cries for help in vain ;
Who will save the world,
When *siddhas* have hidden themselves
In the lofty mountains ?
The Yogis who smear ashes on their bodies
Have lost all wisdom ;
The world is lost without the Guru.[49]

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The *siddhas* then asked him his name, his sect and his object of contemplation. Nanak replied : "I dwell in God who has his seat in every heart. I act as I'm bidden by the true Guru. I came in accordance with God's will and will depart when He so ordains. To reflect upon my only God is my prayer. He who knows himself acts this wise and is absorbed in the True One."[50] The *siddhas* then told him that the world is impassable like an ocean, and anyone who fails to escape it is drowned. To this Nanak replied : "Like a lotus or the water-fowl, I live in the water so that I'm not drowned. He who meditates on God's Word and lives desireless in the midst of desire, remains unaffected by sorrow. For him, there is neither coming nor going."[51]

The *siddhas*, then tried to take a measure of his detachment from the material world (*vairagya*) and asked him to bring a glass of water from Mansarovar. Nanak found the lake replete with precious stones and gloriously shining pearls. These did not interest the great sage who only took water from the lake. That broke the *siddha's* spell.

On the way back from Mansarovar, he went to Hassan Abdal where a Muslim Sufi, Vali Kandhari, lived. Mardana sought some water from the Vali[52] who refused saying that a *Kafir* (infidel) was not entitled to it. He also challenged Mardana that if his companion was a saint, he could get water from anywhere or even from nowhere, and if he was not a saint, he could not lay claim to being *Murshid* or preceptor. Mardana reported the point to Nanak who asked him to dig up the earth. As soon as he pushed aside a couple of stones, sparkling water gushed out ! Meanwhile, the Vali's reservoir of water dried up. This infuriated the Vali who threw a big boulder towards Nanak. This, he stopped with the palm of his right hand ! In memory of this event, a stone carrying the impression of his hand stands at Hassan Abdal, known as the *Panja Saheb* (the Sacred Palm) now in Pakistan and the site is the seat of a great fair on every Baisakhi (13 April).

XI

Nanak returned to Kartarpur in 1518, and in 1519 he left for the Middle Eastern lands including Mecca, Medina and Mesopotamia via Aminabad, Wazirabad, Gujarat, Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Ghazi

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Khan, Jaunpur, Shikarpur, Hyderabad (Sind), Surat and Karachi. This story is based on *Janam Sakhis* whose evidentiary value in respect of miracles alleged to have been performed by Nanak is doubtful. An English scholar, Macleod, in his thesis on Nanak has expressed the opinion that Nanak's visit to Mecca, Baghdad etc. is highly improbable. But then, there is the uncontestable writing of Swami Anand Acharya (Snow-Birds) who, on reading the inscription[53] in Arabic at Baghdad stated : "Upon this slab of granite did thou sit discoursing on love and holy light, O Guru Nanak ! Prince among India's holy ones ! What songs did thou sing to charm the Soul of Iran ! What peace from Himalayas' lonely caves and forests did thee carry to the groves and rose gardens of Baghdad ! What light from Badrinath's snowy peak did thou bring to illuminate the heart of Bahlol—thy saintly Iranian disciple ! Eight fortnights did Bahlol hearken to thy words on life and its mystery, on the path and spring eternal, while the moon waxed and waned in the pomegranate groves besides the grass-covered desert of the dead ! And after thou O Nanak, didst depart for thy beloved Bharat, Bahlol the fakir spoke to none ; he listened not to the voice of man !"[54]

It appears, then, that Nanak did visit Mecca, Medina etc. It is said that at Mecca he slept with his feet unknowingly turned towards the Kaaba—the House of God for the Muslims who kiss the black stone (*Sang-i-Aswad*) built in there, as a mark of love for the Holy Prophet. The head priest, Rukunuddin was incensed at this, and directed Nanak to remove his feet. Nanak told him that he was too tired to rise but that he could turn his feet in a direction where God did not exist. The priest rudely dragged Nanak's feet towards one direction after another but saw the vision of the Kaaba everywhere. Nanak then told him that there is no fixed place of God : neither a house, nor a mosque nor a temple !

And now see the wide traveller, Master and First,
Unto Mecca, where crescent from the skies had burst
Into torrents of gleaming light of Islam !
Visited with all reverence, behold his spiritual thirst !
Dreaming of Him, in deep salubrious repose and thought;
Nanak in siesta, his feet, unkowingly towards Kaaba brought ;
The Grand Qazi asked, with dreaded dismay,
Look stranger ! Thy feet points to the House of God.
And behold such Nanak's meaningful retort !

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Pray, turn my feet, where God resides not !
Truth of All Pervading, flashed on Qazi's mind,
This stranger has perceived God, as one really aught;
God is not in my house, mosque or temple, nay,
But the Unseen Hand, is every where, in night and day !
Music is his food, his garment the colours of life,
Patching ignorance with wisdom, is His Divine play.[55]

What Nanak meant was that one may seek God where He is readily available. A true seeker should find out a living saint wherever he may be, remain in his company, accept him as the embodiment of all the gods, incarnations and past saints, devote himself to his service, and cultivate love and faith in him and thus have his object achieved. A king who is dead and gone, howsoever, just and munificent he might have been, cannot now bestow rank or wealth on anyone. For obtaining these favours we must approach the reigning sovereign. Maulana Rum says : "Since thou ha t accepted the spiritual guidance of the *Murshid* (perfect guide or guru), thou shalt consider God and prophet included in him." That is, there is no difference between the Supreme Being and the perfect spiritual guide. The latter includes the creator and incarnations. One who desires to have communion with the Lord, must seek the guru in the person of saints. Those who wear coloured robes, are not necessarily saints. A real saint is one who has ascended up to the Region of Truth and is in communion with the *Sat Purush* (True Lord). It is immaterial whether he is a householder or a recluse, whether he is a Brahmin or not. The Lord can only be seen within oneself or in a perfect saint, who is the the real and natural guide of the whole world, and a true aspirant shall find him at only these two places.[56] To quote Maulana Rum again: "The mosque is within the *Auliya*; all should worship there, for the Lord resides there." The prophet said "The Lord has announced, that I do not live in heaven nor on earth. I dwell in the hearts of devotees. Should'st thou aspire after me, seekest me there."[56] It, therefore, behoves every true seeker to find out the preceptor of the time, receive intiation from him, serve him with body, mind and riches and cultivate love for, and reliance on, Him. He shall then achieve his object in a short time. In Sanskrit it has been said that guru is Brahma, Vishnu, Siva and Paar Brahm. Hence, obeisance to Him.

Krishna has also said in Bhagwat Gita : "He who wants to

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see, serve and love me, should serve my devotees. That shall I consider to be my own service and shall be pleased with him. For, him alone I love who loves my true devotees. I do not live above or below, neither in one heaven nor the others, but I live in the heart of my devotees."

The physical form assumed by saints is what can be seen by physical eyes here. His real form is that of the Lord Himself because he always remains enraptured in the bliss of the Supreme Being. Until such time as a true devotee perceives within himself the real form, he should consider the physical form of the preceptor as that of the Supreme Being and go on increasing love and faith therein. When he has the glimpse of His Own or Real Form within himself, he becomes one with the Supreme Being, and acquires the same form as that of preceptor. His real object is thus achieved. This should make it clear that redemption is possible only through the service, company and love of the preceptor. The past saints, gurus, incarnations and prophets cannot offer guidance now, nor can they show us their Real Form. Therefore, a seeker cannot have genuine faith in, and love for them. Even if there be real love, there will be no progress and he will remain as he was. There may be some purification of the mind, but the seat of the spirit would remain unchanged, *ie*, the spirit would not be elevated, and would continue in the impure region. Purification would not be abiding, because Illusion (*Maya*) is so dominant in the lower region that a person will be shaken off his faith by the force of its evil influence and hurled into the whirlpool of sensual pleasures. It is impossible to realize Real Form or to get rid of all the evils without the mercy of the perfect preceptor to be obtained through service and devotion. There are so many doubts lurking in the mind that one becomes conscious of them only in his presence. In short, it is impossible to attain true love and spiritualism without the grace and guidance of the preceptor of the time. Incarnations who appeared in this world, had also to adopt gurus.

Some persons believe that the Vedas, Shastras, the Granth and other scriptures are 'Guru'. No doubt the study of these books can be useful. It is, however, a mistake to depend entirely on them and not search for a living preceptor. The secrets of spiritual practice which

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can be made known only by him cannot be reduced to writing. There are only vague references to them, here and there. Books can serve only as testimony for some basics; but the essential secrets can be imparted only by a guru. The study of books can only give a degree of intellectual satisfaction but it cannot show the way to the Lord. Jt can only assist our understanding, it can show what is right and wrong. A sincere person will follow what is right but without the perfect preceptor it is impossible to control the mind and to do away with all lower impulses. So long as the lower self is active, the seed of both good and bad actions exists and it will revive the tree of evil as soon as it is nourished by sensual pleasures. Thus it should be clear that books can only serve as a guide to the seeker in finding the perfect preceptor, but they cannot take his place. And those who are content with the teachings of a departed saint alone do not care to go into the presence of the Lord, nor shall they see Him.

The priests asked Nanak as to which was greater—Hinduism or Islam. He replied that the way which can lead a person to the *Sat Purush* is the only right way. When asked about the value of fasts, holy books and pilgrimages, he replied that in this *Kali* Age obedience to Guru is real fasting, the hearing of "unstruck melody" is the holy book and the constant companionship of the Guru is the true pilgrimage. This done, one will abandon all craving. "He who reads," Nanak said, "but stills not his mind, his anxiousness goes not. But he who is in love, all that he does is worship !"[57] It is the saints who create books; the books can never create saints. A true saint can transform by mere sight or touch anyone into a saint.[58]

Nanak said : 'Be thankful to your Guru a hundred times a day. For he can transform, a man into God in no time or delay."[59] So many people who have read and recited the holy books do not understand what is written there. It is only the living saint who can enliven the seeker and remove clouds of misconceptions. The company of the preceptor, therefore, is of the essence.[60]

A man may praise the physician Luqman, but if he finds fault with the living physician, that would indicate that he is not just now in need of a doctor. If he were in pain, he would look to the physician nearest at hand. The mere name of the great Luqman cannot cure a sick man of this day.[61] So long as he refuses the services of a

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living physician he must remain sick. One who is anxious to make spiritual advancement and regards the pleasures of the world in their true light as poison, will not rest until he has found a real adept whose worth he will at once understand. But the insincere will go on indulging in the worship of sacred places, idols and past sages, utterly unable to recognize the merits of a true preceptor.

From Mecca, Nanak went to Medina, and from there on to Baghdad where he sang his own prayer: "There are millions of nether and upper regions, and no one has found their limits; only my God knows how vast is His expanse." What Nanak said in 1520 is borne out by latest scientific researches which testify to the millions of such planets as this earth. And what he means by "millions of upper and nether regions" is that these regions have their own deities and prophets all of whom are perpetually consumed in the furnace of desire, because they failed to find a preceptor. If you ask how an ordinary mortal may be expected to find one when those deities failed, the answer is that they failed because their vanity stood in their way and prevented them from cultivating belief. Hence, he could not manifest himself to them. Their job was to improve the world under the administration of Brahm. But if they had accepted the *Satguru* they would never have devoted themselves to that sort of work. It is not the intention of saints to let this world be destroyed entirely; there must be some people or forces to look after the betterment of this region. The instructions of the preceptor however, are not meant for them. Nanak proclaimed that ordinary mortals in the grip of this world, cannot escape from transmigration when great teachers of the past could not do so. Only those will believe the preceptor who are predestined to obtain merit and are about to be released from the cycle of transmigration; those are the souls who are truly anxious to see the Lord. People who are prey to worldly desires cannot heed the preceptor's word. Everyone should understand that only a preceptor can save us from the endless cycle of birth and rebirth, and take us to the Region of Truth which is our real Home. Deities, incarnations, and prophets, cannot escape from the cycle of transmigration. since they are without a Guru. Nor can they save others. Indeed, only they are entitled to find a Guru who are ready to believe and follow him to the end.

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XII

All this was bound to cause disquiet in the sleepy town of Baghdad. The disturbed adherents of Islam reported the matter to the head priest (*Pir*) Dastgir, who summoned Nanak to explain his conduct and account for his unIslamic activities and utterances. Nanak refused to go, saying that he was the servant of his Master, the minstrel of God and that the priest could himself come and listen to his hymns. Piqued by his refusal, Dastgir decreed that Nanak be stoned to death by the faithful.[62] The people thronged to the place where Nanak was resting. Mardana was frightened but Nanak advised him to rely on God's Will. When they came closer to him, with stones in their hands, Nanak began to sing hymns of devotion and their hostility vanished and they returned to Dastgir. He now desired to see Nanak to take a measure of the man who had come all the way from India to hurt the sentiments of the entire Muslim world. On reaching the graveyard where Nanak was resting, Dastgir heard the divine hymns, and instead of punishing him, he felt a strong urge to sit by his side and discuss spiritual matters. Nanak told him that he was neither a Hindu nor a Muslim and that he was not bound by any rites or rituals, or idol worship. He told Dastgir that the way to realize God was through the practice of listening to the "unstruck melody"—the key to which lay with the Guru. When questioned about his love of music which Dastgir said stirs baser passions, Nanak told him that the spirit had come from the higher regions on the current of sound and on that alone it can ascend. All religion, Nanak said, is a matter of love for the Lord and love has music as its ally. But mere singing or playing of instruments or dancing is useless. It would only "create dust which falls into the head and hair."[63] It all depends on your object. If one's object is God, the path lies through love and music; if one's object is this world, then also baser forms of love and music would be found to be useful. Asked about the meaning of religion, Nanak replied that religion meant restoration of the drop (human soul) to the ocean (Almighty)—reunion and the road to that lies through hearing the "unstruck melody". When asked about the *raison d' etre* of the creation, Nanak said that God willed it to make everyone happy. If one reads Nanak's hymns carefully, one can easily deduce a whole theory of creation there.

XIII

Nanak presumes that the Supreme Father is a vast homogeneous

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ocean of pure spirit. He is perfect, sufficient in Himself to Himself, in an ecstatic state of love and bliss. Before creation, He alone was conscious. There was none but He to see and none but Him to be seen. There was only the Lord immersed in His own rapturous bliss.

His primary characteristic is love; not, however, for any other being, for there was no other. All was directed inwards, towards Himself. Love was and is the essence of His nature, ever active and, not requiring any object for its expression. He was and is nothing but a vast reservoir of love and bliss. That limitless reservoir of love which alone was and is in existence, with none to adore or exchange love with Him was and is an ocean of absolute bliss.

Some notion of that condition may be had by thinking of one's self as so absorbed in an object of love that all thought of self is forgotten. You forget yourself and your body, you have no consciousness except of the beloved object. In contemplating that form, you forget yourself in rapturous ecstasy. At the culmination of that ecstasy, the form disappears and one remains with no conception or knowledge of anything save bliss.

Nothing which exists is without love. An entity can be conscious only of what is of its own essence. This is as true of the Lord as of the minor entities. If anything were existent without love, the Lord could not be conscious of it.

As love in its highest and best sense is the source of the greatest happiness known to us, so the perfection of love, which characterized the Supreme Father was accompanied by the highest ecstasy of bliss. He was in the highest degree concentrated. Indeed, love means concentration or attraction in a particular direction; in this instance towards Himself. This means that there was within the Supreme Father a vast region in which the pure spirituality which constituted His substance existed in the highest degree of tension or intensity, and that there was another region from which spirituality had been, to a certain extent, withdrawn by the action of the concentrating force and in which, therefore, the spirituality which remained was of a lesser degree of tension or intensity. All tendency to expansion, unless restrained, results in diffusion and annihilation. No force can continue

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without concentration. The tendency of spirit to concentrate is, throughout the universe, the constant safeguard against dissolution.

Our invariable experience is that before any work can be done, a centre must be formed, from which a current or an equivalent connection for transmitting and applying the force, must proceed. If we consider the action of air currents proceeding from storm centres of ocean, currents proceeding from disturbed areas, of electric currents proceeding from batteries or dynamos, of magnetic currents proceeding from the poles of magnets, of gas or steam under pressure proceeding from confined and highly concentrated bodies of gas or steam, of heat radiating from heat centres, of sound emanating from sound centres, of the engine transmitting its power to all appliances which perform work through rods, levers and the like and of vital currents in living animals, trees and plants proceeding from the vital centres to the extremities, we shall be reminded of the universal application of this theorem.

Concentration being necessary for existence and expression, that upon which the existence of all depends must be possessed of concentration. Here our idea of a focus of concentration is a small or limited area. But this should not be imagined in the case of the Supreme Focus. As compared to the focus of a lamp, the great focus of the Sun is illimitable. Above are focii of a still greater magnitude until the Supreme Focus is reached, which is limitless, and endless. That focus is the Supreme Father.

Since He was in the highest degree concentrated, it must be concluded that He was absolute bliss, for we know that bliss attends upon concentration; that He possessed absolute knowledge, for we know that knowledge results from concentration; and that He was characterized by absolute force, for we know that force is also a manifestation of concentration.

He possessed all the bliss sensations in their highest degree of refinement and keenness, though there were neither sense organs nor objects of sense. This appears inconceivable, but some notion of it may be formed by supposing our consciousness divested of vehicles which form the medium of consciousness on this plane, and still to be fully active.

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The proposition that the Lord is limitless but undifferentiated—that to impute any differentiation in Him is to impeach His infinitude—is subject to *reductio ad absurdum*. Such a being could cause nothing, could do nothing. Every force we know of in the universe acts by first creating a centre, and then its action is inversely proportionate to the distance from that centre. But the assumption that the Lord is undifferentiated would require a force acting without a centre and equally everywhere. Our experience proves that such a force cannot so act of itself. If there be action, there must be another force to set the first force in motion, For instance, the homogeneous expanse of the ocean is actionless until it is operated upon by the winds. If therefore, the homogeneous force acts, its action is determined from outside itself, that is, it is not self-existent. Nor could any being or thing arise within Him, were He undifferentiated; for if it be asserted that there could, the question must be answered that if a being arose in one part, why did it not arise in another ? Why not in all ? It is also evident that there could have been but one such being as the Lord for had there been another like Him in all respects, the two must have merged. There was never, in fact, another like Him; the statement is only made to make the subject clear.

The inhabitants of the Region of Truth who came into existence as separate individuals with the first creation, are of a lower degree of intensity than the Supreme Father, and this is the reason why they did not merge in Him. It is a law that spirits of different degrees of intensity are eternally separated. If they could merge, degradation of the higher must result, which is not permitted. Before creation, therefore, the condition of the Supreme Father was that of a highly concentrated but otherwise homogenous expanse of substance, that is separate entities did not exist in Him.

As to the much mooted question of the personality versus impersonality of God, it should be considered that if He is impersonal, infinitely expanded and undifferentiated, then, what is the source of the infinite gradations and differentiation of the Universe ? The teaching of Nanak is that the Supreme Father is both personal and impersonal; that he has infinite extension and also a form in the Region of Truth. His form, however, came into existence as a preliminary to creation.

As has been said, the existence in the being of the Supreme

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Father of a region where spirit was highly concentrated necessitated the existence also of a more or less depleted region, a region from which spirit had been, to a greater or lesser extent, withdrawn by the action of the forces of concentration. This condition of depletion of spirit resulted, as will be shown, in the individualization of separate entities and in the higher and lower creations, including the genesis of mind and matter, which are each a spirit in lesser or greater degradation owing to attentuation.

It should be understood, however, that all portions of the depleted regions possessed some spirituality, and that this spirituality, though depleted, had an inner core or thread of substantially the most intense spirituality, by means of which the consciousness of the Supreme Father pervaded the whole. That an entity may have a conception of another entity, it is necessary that both the knower and the object known should possess a common essence in some form or the other, and in some degree or the other. Otherwise, it is impossible that there should be knowledge of the object. Now, a thing which cannot be known cannot exist and all that is known must be within the knowledge of the Lord. But the Lord is pure spirituality and nothing else. Therefore, though spirituality may be of a very small degree, it must be present in some degree if there be existence. That is, whatever exists in the creation must be known to the Lord and cannot; therefore, be without spirituality.

The attractive force of the spirit of the concentrated pole was always at work, drawing towards itself the spirit of the other pole. This process of attraction went on through countless ages. The attractive force acted upon the depleted spirit with an effect directly proportional to the intensity of the latter and inversely proportional to its distanee from the Supreme Father. A portion of it yielded to the continued pull and moved towards the concentrated pole as the oil to the wick, and in appearance, though not in reality, fed its spiritual incandescence. Other portions of the depleted spirituality were too tenuous or too remote to be moved. This process went on until all the depleted spirituality which could respond to the attractive forces had been withdrawn upwards. This less dense spirituality, not having the same degree of tension as the spirituality of the concentrated pole, being of lower quality, could not unite with the latter. It remained, as it were, suspended therein. As vapour of water, when drawn up

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into the atmosphere does not become air, nor does the air change in any respect, but the two remain separate because they are different, so the higher and lower spirituality remained separate, essentially unchanged by the association. There was an eternal demarcation between the two, which nothing could remove; and this was obviously inevitable, for assimilation would have been a change, and the Nameless Being is unchangeable. If this depleted spirituality could have become a part of Him, it would have been such, originally. But although the suspended spirituality continued to retain its essential character, it was, to some extent, modified by its contact, through immeasurable ages, with the Supreme Spirituality of the Nameless Being. It was vivified; its covers, to some extent, acquired the intensity of pure spirit. It acquired qualities which made it especially fit for the work of creation which it, afterwards, performed. But for it, and for the preparation it received by association with the Nameless Being, creation would not have been possible.

Because of its essential difference from the Nameless Being and its consequent inability to unite with His substance, it could not remain for ever in its suspended position. The time came when it had to descend; just as vapour suspended in the atmosphere falls when the point of saturation is reached. It falls because of (1) its greater density as compared with the atmosphere; (2) its mass due to the quantity which had been drawn up and (3) the attraction of gravity which is always playing upon it from below. That period is termed "the fulness of time"

The condition of saturation implies that a coarser substance has been drawn up into a finer substance and is held in suspension therein. The point of saturation is reached when the coarser material reaches such a development that it can no longer remain in suspension. Similarly the seed in the womb develops until the child is complete when, because of its completeness, it is compelled to issue forth. It cannot remain. These are examples of "the fulness of time" in matters familiar to us; many others might be referred to.

The Supreme Father did not retain within Himself the spirituality which He had drawn up, not because He could not retain it or that His attractive power had become exhausted or wearied, but because the spirituality of lower intensity, suspended in the embrace of His perfect spirituality was to such a degree different in chracter from

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the latter, and had become so considerable in quantity, and was to such an extent always under the downward pull of the depleted spirituality which remained below, upon it, and was so fully impressed with the quantities which fitted it for its work below by the influence of its long and intimate association with His substance, that it could not remain; just as water suspended in the sky descends as rain, not because the holding capacity of the air has diminished but because its condition relative to its environment has reached the point when it must fall and it has become too heavy to remain in the sky; or just as the child comes forth from the mother's womb, not because the womb can no longer contain it, but because it is fully developed and it can no longer remain there.

The First Created Being was evolved as a child is brought forth from the mother's womb. That is, the depleted spirituality was thrown down in "the fulness of time", as the child when developed is ejected from the womb. There was also another reason. At the feet of the Supreme Father lay that other spirituality of still greater depletion, which could not respond to His attraction. He desired that this also should share in His bliss. To this end, it was His will that the work of creation should be inaugurated.

In initiating creation, the object which the Supreme Father had in view was to restore, as far as possible, the condition of full consciousness and bliss to the depleted spirituality below Him, which by reason of its depletion, had lost consciousness. Otherwise, the depleted spirituality would remain eternally unconscious with no participation in the bliss of the higher centre. A being whose nature is all love can have no aim except bliss for all. Where there is a diminution of love, spirituality and knowledge, there only commences sorrow which is of the nature of Satan.

This restoration to consciousness could not be affected by at once imparting higher spirituality to the entity of lower spirituality. High spirituality bestowed on an entity whose spirituality is of lesser intensity will only cause misery to the latter. If a cow were endowed with the spirituality of a man, only misery could result to the cow. The right method is to send the entity of low spirituality to a plane where it can have full play. The creation of lower planes as a theatre for the restorative process was, therefore, necessary, but the plan adopted

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shows the intention to confer much happiness and little sorrow. When ever a creation begins there is at first great bliss, and the span of happiness is long, as in *Sat Yuga* (Era of Truth) and the other *Yugas* (Eras) while that of sorrow is short. From that it appears that the intention of the Creator was to give the Jiva (Creature) happiness on a plane on which he could enjoy it; and to give him as much happiness as possible, consistent with the ultimate purpose of introducing him to unending, perfect bliss. Obviously, as long as happiness continues, the creature will remain contented, and cannot be rescued since he will make no effort to escape; and his own effort is essential.

In order that creation might proceed, it was necessary that a centre should be formed and that a current should issue therefrom. The instrument for this work was at hand in the mass of depleted spirituality which had received the impress of His exalted nature, and which had thus become well fitted to go forth and accomplish creation.

So, in the fulness of time, a great commotion occurred at the point of touch between the Supreme Being and the region of the depleted spirituality, bursting forth as "sound." The sound formed a reservoir or ovoid which was the beginning of the manifested body of the Lord, the manifestation of the unmanifested Nameless Being.[64] The manifested merged in the unmanifested and was not separated from its infinitude. Nameless Being underwent no change. This was the beginning of time. Before, there had been nothing to mark time.

The ovoid emitted a vast spiritual sound, the same sound which had preceded its formation and gave it form. Nameless Being first manifested Himself as sound, then as form. Sound is subtler than form.

The Supreme Father was in absolute silence. There was no sound. But when He wished to communicate with the spirits which lay below Him, He put forth sound. There is absolutely no output of energy without sound. It is a form of spirit. In the spiritual regions, sound is not at all like the lifeless sound of this plane. It is there of itself, intelligent. As sound was the first manifestation of spirit, so hearing is the primary sense. The other sense-powers follow.

Every creation, high or low, proceeds after long action of

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attraction on the motionless expanse ; in the "fulness of time" the sound issues forth and creation begins. "Fulness of time" is the term used in all religions to indicate this epoch. The Sound is the Word of St. John. It is also, no doubt, what the Christians have termed The Holy Ghost, that is, the spiritual current which connects the Father with the Son, the "Son" being the Creature who, by gaining communion with his God while in the body had earned the right to the designation of the Son.

The current of spirituality was of a dual character—the current of spirit and the current of sound—and they operated in perfect union, the greatest bliss resulting from their being thus united. The former had the centre-forming capacity ; the latter, the power of attraction. Thus sound proceeded from spirit, and spirit, in turn, proceeded from sound. Sound and spirit are as the outgoing and incoming breath of the manifest body of the Lord.

Meanwhile, because of the gradually increasing depletion from the concentrated pole outward or downward, the expanse of the depleted spirituality tended to become separated into layers or strata of gradually increasing tenuity, each separated from the adjoining layers by casings or covers of a still more tenuous spirituality which tended to form about all segregated spirituality by reason of the action of the concentrating force while the constantly operating lines of attractive force proceeding from the Supreme Father tended to concentrate the spirituality of the nascent layers at the point of intersection of the lines therewith.

Thus, at each appreciable change of spirit tension, a vast number of centres of spirituality were produced, each outwardly proceeding line of attraction becoming, indeed, a succession of such centres. Each such centre when formed was a separate, individualized and potentially intelligent spirit but then in an unconscious condition. They were separated from each other by casings or covers, as the layers which formed about them were separated from each other, as a result of their individual concentration. As a simile for this condition, the orange may be taken. It has a thick enclosing cover all round and enveloping each section a second cover, much thinner ; each section made up of a multitude of cells containing liquid, each cell is so gossamer-like that if you crush it, it seems to dissolve into its liquid contents.

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All separate individualities must have separate covers. Without covers, spirit entities of like spiritual tension on the same plane, would merge with each other. Thus only can separate individuality be preserved. The Supreme Father is the only being who has no cover. In our region (*pind desh*) covers take the form of mind and body. The triple constitution with which we are familiar is always preserved. Consciousness requires the presence of the three factors. If one becomes inoperative, for instance, if the body ceases to function through paralysis, consciousness ceases.

In the purely spiritual regions, covers are there, but they are not of mind or matter; they are of spirit and they bear an analogy. They have less spirituality than the spirits they sheathe. The cover originated from and essentially represents depletion of spirituality. In the lower regions covers are denser and spirits have greater depletion. But howsoever depleted the outer layer may be, at the innermost core there is always a thread of substantially the highest spirituality. Were it not so, the universe would disintegrate.

Covers cannot by themselves maintain separate existence or individual consciousness. Association with a spirit entity is essential to them. Cover and spirit are complementary to each other. A cover which loses association with a spirit suitable to it becomes unconscious, inert and lifeless. A familiar example is the skin of the body which, so long as it remains a part of the latter, is vitalized by the spirit and the body, but when it is peeled off, it loses its vitality

From covers so situated, matter originated ; matter did not exist in the beginning. There was only pure spirit or force. Matter is, as it were, a crystallization or consolidation of force, and this crystallization was brought about by the depletion of the intensity or tension of spirit, due to the causes which have been set forth.

Science asserts that force cannot exist without matter. This mistake is due to the fact that the knowledge upon which science is based does not go beyond matter. Hence the erroneous conclusion that no existence, unassociated with matter, is possible.

The spiritual centres, in the region adjoining the Supreme Source, must not be thought of as insignificant, (though they were so, indeed, in comparison with His immense refulgence) as they had very

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great spiritual potentiality, although unconscious before creation. This unconsciousness was wholly due to depletion of spiritual intensity or tension, though a secondary cause was the presence of the covers which resulted from depletion.

Another and equally accurate way of stating this fact is that they were unconscious because they did not possess the same capacity for love as the Lord. They were dazed and lost in the intensity of His love. They had not the spiritual strength to maintain consciousness in the presence of His rapturous love and bliss.

Thus, an infinite number of spirits lay dormant at the feet of the Supreme Father, encased in attenuated spirituality. The process of the awakening of spirits lying in comatose condition which was the next step in creation must have proceeded in a planned fashion. It seems that the outflowing current from the ovoid produced a powerful vibration which broke up the covers and freed the spirit entities, while the ovoid, which had become the centre of attraction, as also the current, exerted a tug upon them. This tug was sufficient to extricate many of them from the opened covers and draw them towards the ovoid. Those of great spiritual intensity were drawn into the ovoid and became, as it were, cells in the nascent body of the Lord. They did not, however, lose their own individuality. The demarcation between these spirits and the reservoir is eternal and subject to no change. Others of less spiritual tension stopped at a lower level, and there they took a permanent location adapted to them. The spirit entity may be said to have reached its appropriate plane, "the saturation point" of bliss. For, as has already been explained, it is a law that a spirit is incapable of going above the level to which its degree of intensity adapts it, without losing consciousness. Though conscious on its proper plane, it would be unconscious (unless assisted by a higher current) on a higher plane. There it would not have the spiritual strength to maintain its consciousness in the presence of the intensity of the bliss of that plane. It would lose consciousness in the "intoxication of bliss"

It is for this reason that if a creature has not sufficient spirituality to maintain consciousness on the levels upon which it is, it must descend below in order to retain its consciousnes and so that its capacity for sensation may not be wasted. This is the cause of occasional descent of the spirit from human form to animal forms.

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XIV

To revert to the story of Nanak's journey in the Middle East, it seems that he returned to India in 1520. Before returning here, he went to Rum and imparted instructions, known as *Nasihat Nama* (Set of Admonitions), to the Caliph there, who used to be an extremely cruel person. Then, after passing through Jalab and Dayar-Bakar and crossing the river Euphrates, he reached the city of Swas, from where he went to the city of Turan in Iran where, after converting the Hakim (administrator) to the path of righteousness, he created a fountain which is still there and is called *Charan Ganga* (Ganges issuing from the holy feet). Then, he reached Multan where again a legend which is attributed to several saints sprang up. It is said that the leading sufi saint of Multan sent Nanak a cup of milk, full to the brim, signifying that the place was already full of them and another like him could not be contained. Nanak placed a jasmine flower on top of the milk, suggesting that just as flower with its weightlessness floated on the surface and did not displace the milk, so would he live in their midst, with the burden only of fragrance. A similarlegend is attributed to the advent of Shams Tabrez to Multan where Wahab-ul-Haq Khuda Dost sent Tabrez a cup of milk full to the brim. And the rest.[65]

From Multan Nanak came to Sayadpur in 1521 which had been plundered by Babar in 1519-20. On seeing the barbarity committed by his troops, Nanak cried in anguish :

The charming women, who adorned their hair
In plaits, and filled in their partings with vermilion ;
Their locks were sheared with scissors, and
Dust was thrown on their shaven heads.
They who dwelt in palaces,
Do not find a place to sit now even in public.
Hail ! O Lord, hail !
O Primal Lord ! Thy limits are unknown ;
Thou change thy garb many a time.
When they were married,
They looked beautiful beside their spouses ;
They were carried in their palanquins,
The ivory bangles adorned their arms ;
Water was waved around them and

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Fans glittered over their heads;
A hundred thousand rupees were offered
To them as presents on entering their
New homes and also the same amount
When they stood up, chewing coconuts and dates,
And enjoyed their bridal couches ;
But now chains are on their necks,
And their jewel necklaces are broken into pleces;
Beauty and riches which gave them pleasure
Now have turned their enemies ;
The soldiers have been ordered to disgrace them
And carry them away;
If God willeth, He blesseth and
If He pleaseth otherwise He giveth punishment ;
If they forethink, they would have not come to grief ;
But the rulers had forgotten
About God, amidst joys and pleasures.
Now the rule of Babar is established,
No one can have his meals to eat ;
The Muslims lost their prayer time,
And Hindus of worship ;
The Hindu ladies have no place to sit,
And draw their cooking squares
And annoint their forehead,
With the frontal marks ;
They who did not remember Rama
Are not now even allowed to say Allah;
Some people who had fled away are back now
Asking for their lost relations ;
Such is their lot ordained by God,
They will weep in anguish their whole lives Nanak !
What the Lord willeth hath come ;
What could a man do against His will ![66]

Although there is no mention of it in the Tuzak-i-Babari, legend has it that Nanak and Mardana were captured by Babur's soldiers and that while Nanak was made to carry heavy load on his head, Mardana was used as a groom for the horse of Babar's commander, Mir Khan. But there is the contradictory element in the legend that as soon as Mir Khan saw Nanak, he was stunned.[67] In any case, they were

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brought to the prison and were ordered to grind corn at a hand-worked stone-mill (*chakki*). As soon as Mardana was directed to grind the corn, he cried : "Let all the stone-mills work" and throughout the city, stone-mills began to grind. That, brought Babar at Nanak's feet. He ordered the release of Nanak and Mardana and promised to rule the country justly and fairly. "O, Holyman !" Babar pleaded, "forgive my sins. I promise not to commit oppression on the poor and downtrodden in future." The Emperor, regretted the discourtesy shown to him and asked if he could do any service to the man of God. Nanak replied that he did not need anything for himself but if he had a generous heart and desired to meet the wishes of the servant of the Lord, he should set free all the prisoners, and their property and valuables be restored. Babar, immediately issued orders setting all the captives free. The confiscated property was restored to them and army posts were withdrawn from the town.[68]

When Nanak met Babar again, the latter is reported to have offered some fine liquor and perfumes to Nanak who sang :

Thy fear is my hemp,
My heart its pouch ;
O God I am mad after Thee,
Cut off from others;
My hands as the bow,
I beg at Thy door for Thy sight.
O God, grant me the alms I beg ;
Saffron, flowers, musk and sandal
Make the body fragrant ;
No one describeth the butter or milk impure,
So is the saint,
Of any caste he may be.
O Lord, grant Nanak the alms of Thy mercy,
That he may be imbued with
Thy Name and continue to love
Thee for ever ![69]

XV

Nanak reached Kartarpur in 1522, where he finally settled apparently as a householder but really as a sage. His wife and his son, Laxmi Chand, were there ; the other son, Sri Chand, had become a recluse. Mardana had diedand Nanak took his son, Shahzada,

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into his service to play the rebeck like his father to the holy congregations. It is said that in 1523, Nanak went to Achal Batala (Gurdaspur district) where a big *Shivratri* (a Hindu festival) fair was in progress. There, some yogis of the Gorakhnath cult met him again. It is said that Bhangarnath asked Nanak :

Why he had mixed
The vinegar with pure milk ?
When the milk becomes sour,
No butter is produced by churning it ;
Why had he put off
The holy hermit's garb,
And started living like
An ordinary man of the world ?[70]

To which Nanak replied :

That his mother was
An unskilful woman,
Who did not even know that
The churning pot must be
Cleaned before churning ;
And thus the butter was
Spoiled by her and
Ghee could not be made.
The yogi called himself
An anchorite merely,
By giving up the worldly affairs ;
And yet he was moving about
With a begging bowl
At the doors of family men ;
When the man did not do anything here,
How he could expect anything in the other world ?[71]

The yogis once again asked Nanak to prove himself through performance of miracles. Nanak bluntly told them that a belief based upon miracles cannot endure permanently. So long as a doctrine is not comprehended by the reasoning faculty, in its intellectual and theological aspects, it is not likely to leave an impress upon the mind and told them that saints always act according to the will of the Lord and they keep the possession of such powers a secret. They exhibit mira-

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cles only when the Lord wills it. But this is not done before the world at large. When they perform miracles, it means that they are to leave the world soon, much to the grief of the true disciples. The performance of miracles is prohibited in true spiritualism. They who are anxious to see miracles are not true seekers :

I have nothing to demonstrate
Before the Yogis;
I depend entirely on the congregations
And the true word of God.[72]

At Kartarpur it is said, one Lehna, a Vaishnav-goddess worshipper, came to meet Nanak and as he saw the sage, was transformed. He was a resident of Matte Ki Serai, a village of Ferozepur district, and the son of a rich businessman, his wife being the daughter of a rich man of Khadur in Amritsar district. Lehna had been introduced to Nanak's hymns by Bhai Jodha, a disciple of Nanak. When Lehna met Nanak, the latter told him :

To be eligible for acceptability to God,
His Will has to be accepted;
Only then can a place in the mansion of
The Lord be found.[73]

A legend is attributed to Nanak's testing of his disciples. One day he assumed the garb of a wild man and donning a tattered gown, a knife in hand and taking some hunting dogs proceeded towards the forest. Seeing him robed thus, many of his followers, fled in terror. Others who went a little further, found some copper coins scattered on the road and picking them, they too hastened back. Some who remained, found a few silver pieces further ahead and, picking these, they also returned home. Only two of his Sikhs and Lehna remained. The party now approached a burning pyre beside which lay a dead body, covered with a white sheet and emitting foul smell. The Guru, his eyes wild, thundered: "Whosoever desires to remain with me, let him eat this corpse." The other Sikhs fled in horror, but Lehna remained and said: "I would obey my Master!" And, as he proceeded towards it, the Guru stopped him saying. "That's enough. I now know how many have the moral strength to follow my path."[74]

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On September 2, 1539 Nanak is supposed to have annointed Lehna as his successor or *Angad* (part of Nanak), placing 5 paises and a coconut in front of him and taking five rounds about him. Bhai Buddha, put the *tilak* mark on *Angad's* forehead. All this was done in face of the protest from Nanak's wife Sulakshna who insisted that her two sons should be appointed as Nanak's successor. To her pleadings: "What is to become of me, of them ?" Nanak replied: "God is your refuge. I have done what God willed me to do."

Hail, my true King, hail !
Thou, who createst and yokest
Each to his appointed task;
And, then when one's days are over,
And the cup is full;
Thou separatest the body from the soul.
Yea, when the hour strikes,
The soul is led away,
And the dear ones wail in sorrow;
Remember God, O my loved ones,
For all must depart;
The world is but for a few brief days,
And then we part;
Like a guest we should bide here,
And be not vain;
For, in the other world,
Only the deeds are reckoned;
And God accepts only those,
Who have lived in His love.
O, Father, they alone mourn us truly,
Who mourn in love;
For our good, not goods,
O love, they alone weep for us,
Who weep for love ![75]

On September 22, 1539, Nanak took to bed and announced that the moment of his departure had come. He asked his family members and followers to sing *Sohila*—the praise of God.

Sing the praises of my Lord and remember the Creator,
Yes, sing the praises of my fearless Lord;
Whose praises giveth the mind peace for ever,

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He taketh care of all and giveth them gifts;
His gifts cannot be evaluated,
How can the Giver be comprehended ?
Appointed hour of the marriage hath come;
O friends, come and pour oil on the threshold,
And bless me that I may meet my Lord;
In every home, today or tomorrow,
Cometh the call from above;
Remember your God in your heart,
For the Day must come for all of us ![76]

He was then 69 years, 10 months and 10 days. The next day, his Hindu and Muslim followers began to quarrel about the mode of disposal of the dead body. The legend that is attributed to Kabir's funeral is repeated about Nanak also :

> His Hindu followers desired to cremate it, while the Muslims wanted to bury it. The elders of both the communities decided that some fresh flowers be kept by each side for the night on the body and the community whose flowers wither first should yield to the other. But in the morning, to the surprise of all, it was found that all the flowers remained fresh. However, when the white sheet was removed from the body, it was found that it was no more there. Ultimately, it was agreed that the sheet of cloth be divided into two equal parts, which was subsequently buried by the Muslims and cremated by the Hindus.[77]

The story that is narrated about Kabir says that his Hindu followers sought to cremate the body while the Muslims were bent upon burying it. There was much fight over the matter. But at the end, when the sheet was removed, people found that the body had vanished and, in its place, there were flowers. The Hindus then took the flowers and built Kabir's *samadh* over them in Maghar (near Gorakhpur in east UP) and the Mohammadans constructed his grave there. Both, the *samadh* and the grave exist side by side even to this day.

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5

FUNDAMENTALS OF NANAK'S TEACHINGS

The basic concept in Nanak is that the Supreme Being is One.[1] And if *O* in Gurumukhi is read as *Om* it would mean that *Om* stands for One. Only *Satnam* is distinct, apart and independent of all, and He created *Om*. Later, *Om* evolved the creation of *Brahamand* (the Region of the Universal Mind). In order to understand the term *Brahamand*, the various regions to which Nanak has referred must be clear. There are three grand divisions of creation—divisions which are determined by three principles—spirit, Word, Name or Sound; mind; and matter of which the body and senses (instruments of action) are made. The first principle, ie, the spirit is the prime cause of everything and resides in the upper most regions, in the inner most part of the body. The locale of mind is below that of spirit. The flesh or body occupies the outermost portion of vehicle or the human form, with senses attached thereto. The three grand divisions in the universe (macrocosm), thus, have corresponding divisions in the human body (microcosm). The three grand divisions are spiritual, spiritual-material, and material-spiritual.

II

In the Region of Truth, there is pure spirit, uncontaminated with matter, and the Supreme Being reigns over spiritual life. Here, there is the purest possible form of life with no desire except to love the Supreme Being who is the ocean of spirit, love and joy. Nothing concerning this division was known to anyone prior to Kabir and Nanak. This division has six-subdivisions in ascending order, viz., the Rotating Cave, the Region of Truth, the Region of the Nameless, the Region of the Imperceptible, the Region of the Fathomless, and the Region of the Supreme Being. These constitute the Region of Grace. The second grand division—spiritual-material—is also free from worldly passions of the lower order. The presiding deity of this division is Brahm who is a tide from the ocean of the Supreme Being.

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He is a sort of viceroy who rules over all life in the second and third grand divisions committed to his care. Here, there is spirit as also matter, but the latter is pure and controlled by the former. Like the first, the second grand division also comprises six sub-divisions, which are the reflections of the six sub-divisions of the Region of Grace.

The first three are the regions of the Creator, the Sustainer, and the Destroyer (the Trinity). Higher up there are the Thousand-Petalled Lotus, (*Niranjan*), the Cottage of Three Prominences (*Om*) and the Spirit Sphere (*Rarankar*). While the three lowest sub-divisions are called as the *Und Desh*, the three higher sub-divisions are called as *Brahamand*. But, in broad terms, the *Und* and *Brahamand* are collectively referred to as *Brahamand*. The sub-divisions of *Brahamand* are represented in the grey matter of the brain, while those of the Region of Grace are represented in the white.

In the third grand division, gross matter predominates over pure spirit. This is called the *Pind Desh* (*pind* means body). Here, the spirit has forgotten the higher abode from which it has come. Like the Region of Grace and the *Brahamand* here also there are six sub-divisions or ganglions. They are situated at the nerve centre at the rectum (the seat of Ganesh), the reproductive organ (the seat of Brahma), the navel (the seat of Vishnu), the heart or the solar plexus situated at the lower end of the sternum (the seat of Siva), the throat (the seat of spirit), and the pineal gland at the root of the nose (situated midway between the two eyes, three quarters to one inch from the root of the nose inwards). This is the sixth ganglion, the third-*til* or eye. This region is dominated by a 'wave' emanating from the Supreme Being and flowing through the 'tide' which we have characterized as the viceroy. This 'wave' for want of a better term, may be called as a Governor who presides over the material universe and controls matter.

While the Region of Grace is imperishable, the *Brahamand* is subject to collective dissolution. At the time of this dissolution, its deity, the Pure Brahm, gets up to the outer rim of the entrance to the Region of Grace and stays there until there is re-creation. In the *Pind Desh*, there is not only collective dissolution but also individual death. Thus, it is only the Region of Grace which is really free from birth and rebirth. In its descent from the Region of Grace the spirit

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has accumulated various coverings of matter and as long as it remains in the second and third grand divisions where matter exists, it cannot be freed from transmigration or birth and rebirth.

III

The Supreme Being was unkown to every religion before the advent of Kabir and Nanak. This Supreme Being is the deity of the Region of Grace. The Lord of the second division is the *Paar* Brahm of the Vedantees, the Lord God of the Bible, *Niranjan* of Kabir and Nanak, the *Nirvan* of the Jains and the Buddhists and the *Lahut* of the Muslim saints. The Lord of *Pind Desh* is the Brahm or *Parmatma* or God of most religions in the world. Neither the Pure Brahm nor the Brahm can ascend to the Region of Grace from which they are permanently cut asunder. For this reason they are dubbed as the *Kaal* which does not mean either time or the angel of death. The term *Kaal* is used by Kabir and Nanak in contradistinction from the term *Dayal* or Merciful. *Dayal* is absolute; the *Kaal* is only relative. The former is absolute good while the latter is 'less good' and contained in it layers of matter shrouding the coarser spirits which could not be attracted towards the *Dayal* and which, therefore, were unconscious. To make them conscious, they had to be pushed down to the level of mind and body.

Thus, the entire creation below the Region of Grace comprises spirit (always good and pure) and matter (always bad, more or less). Man's spirit is a drop from the Ocean—the Supreme Being. But this drop of pure spirit is so mixed with matter that it has now become its slave and unless aided by the Supreme Being in human form (called Preceptor or *Satguru*) is always liable to yield to temptation and sink down further in matter. In the second grand division this mixture of spirit with matter is too inadequate for the latter to emerge triumphant over the former but in the third grand division, matter is so gross and spirit so feeble that it is easily dominated by the former. The end of all religion, according to Nanak, is to liberate the spirit from this domination and take it to the Region of Grace.

IV

It is necessary to remember that matter is indispensable for spiritual life in the second and the third regions. But for matter, the Supreme Being would be a huge ocean filling all space. Before the creation, spirits lay at the feet of the Supreme Being in an unmani-

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fested mass. They could have had no separate form, no individual existence, except through an admixture of matter. In our solar system there are two streams—the one ever improving, the other always deteriorating. The spirits of the first of these streams pass from plants through the lower creation till they reach the human form; they then become heavenly spirits and ultimately merge into the Supreme Being or remain in His presence. Maintenance of individuality in the changes later than man depends upon devotion according to the practice of Word-Audition or the union of the spirit with the Word—the Word being the emanation from the Supreme Being. If such devotion is not practised, the spirit loses its previous individuality and becomes merged into a lower stage fit for its reception. A devotee, when merged into the Supreme Being, can assume his individuality at will. Such a being is called the Perfect Saint, a special Son of the Supreme Being. But the spirits who belong to the deteriorating stream are under the complete influence of matter. At every change, they get lower and lower until they reach the lowest form in the creation.

The special sons of the Supreme Being are full of love and they descend upon the earth periodically, to deliver spirits from the bondage of matter. Nanak was one such son of the Supreme Being.

Nanak says that anyone desirous of reaching the Supreme Being must search for a preceptor and invoke his help and receive instructions from him regarding the manner of devotion and procedure. A preceptor is he who has either descended directly from the highest division or reached that quarter by practice of Word-Audition under the direction of guru. A Sikh is he who, having belief in the preceptor, is practising Word-Audition under his direction and having traversed some distance is pushing on, upwards.

The Supreme Being is impersonal in the first grand division but personal in the second and third. According to Nanak, the deliverance of spirit from the bondage of body, senses and mind, and its gradual ascension into the highest division by the practice of Word-Audition is perfect salvation.

Word-Audition is listening to the internal sound which originally emanated from the Supreme Being. It is the means not only of concentrating the will but also of raising the spirit to its source. This is the true meaning of religion (*re*=again+*legare*=unite, which

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means returning to the source). This sound is Inarticulate Name, while that uttered by tongue is called Articulate Name. The method for taking back the spirit to its original source lies in concentrating at the focus of the eyes, the spirit and mind which are diffused in the body, and tied to external objects by worldly desires and then commencing its journey homeward by listening to the internal sound. This is what Nanak means by Name. In other faiths, we have "the Word" (Bible), *Naad* (Vedas), *Pranava* or *Om* (Gita) and so on. But Nanak's Name or Sound appertains to the Region of Truth, and not to *Brahamand* or *Pind Desh*. It is not by reciting names like Rama or Krishna or Allah that spiritual progress can be made because they do not designate the substance of the Supreme Being. These are artificial names, invented by men. The repetition of true Name means remembering the Supreme Being (*Ism-i-Ba Musamma*). In accordance with the laws of harmony, the repetition within of Inarticulate Names (without regard to their meaning), which are an imitation of the sounds accompanying the emanation of a force out of the presiding deity of a sphere, at a nervous centre corresponding to that sphere, can result in the acquisition of the power of that deity. This principle is enunciated by Moinuddin Chisti thus :

> There is no difference between the name of deity and the deity; the refulgence of that name showeth the beatitude of the object of worship.

Nanak says :

> O my mind ! Engage yourself in the recitation of Name as life is wearing out every moment. Man without Guru's Name is like a bird without wings, an elephant without tusks, a woman without husband, a prostitute's son without father, a scholar without knowledge of the Vedas, a well without water, a cow without milk, a temple without light, a tree without fruits, body without eyes, night without moon, and the earth without clouds. Give up passion, anger, pride and greed and understand, once for all, that nothing is yours in this world !

The articulate names cannot get a devotee to the Supreme Being. The real Name is that which is independent of any artificial device, which is "unstruck melody" like the ringing sound of a bell. There should be an innate relation between the Name and the one whose name it is. If a man says that he is hungry and hence he will

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call the Supreme Being by the name "bread," he should know that there is no relation between the name "bread" and what is taken as "bread". Hence to call the Supreme Being by this name would be meaningless. Such names and others, similar to it, are acquired names. The sound which accompanies the manifestation of some energy is its real name. That name is charged with inherent energy. The energy itself is that name; it is present in the name. Such names and sounds have vital importance in spiritual quest.

It is incorrect to say that first, there is an idea and then, to suit the idea, a name is given. As one authority has put it: "Name and the object of name are parallel to water and its waves ; no difference can be traced between the two." Repetition of true Name awakens power corresponding to it. Mantras, for that reason, have great potentiality which can be realized by repeating them. The sound *Om* is the sound of the Cottage of Three Prominences. Mohammadan fakirs have called it *Musallasi*—The Triangle. *Om* in Arabic is *Hoo.*

Saints have attached great importance to Name. It is the Sound, the life, the refulgence, the nectar, and also the means for reverting back from this world. Spirit will return from here by catching hold of it. This is Word-Audition. Mohammadan fakirs have called it *Sultan-ul-Azkar* (the most exalted of all kinds of recitations).

Tulsi Das was a great devotee. But no one was prepared to listen to the truth in those times. Hence, he composed Ramayan in the form of a story which, nevertheless, is replete with references to inner secrets. About the greatness of Name, he has said: "How much shall I sing the glory of Name ? Even Ram could not do justice to its praise." Similarly, Sur Das, another great devotee, said that he had "heard the note of that flute which would put crores of Krishnas to shame." These saints spoke in riddles because time was not ripe for disclosing subtle points. Sarmad was even executed for speaking the truth ! However, there was some object in this; and such was, in any case, the pleasure of the Lord.

There are many gradations in Inarticulate Name. If, after ascertaining the secrets (Name, Form, Feats and Abode) of the sub-division to which a particular Name pertains, one performs recitation

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of that Name in the prescribed manner at the corresponding centre, the deity of that centre can be awakened. Recitation without a knowledge of these secrets will be meaningless.

If the recitation of even the alphabetical form of an Inarticulate Name is not practised properly, it will be futile in the sense that access to the region to which the Name pertains will not be gained. One may, at the most, get the fruits of good action in the form of proportionate happiness and objects of this region.

There are six centres in the human form and each centre has a Name corresponding to it. The reflections of the three deities, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva have been cast on the three lower centres at the genitals, the navel, and the solar plexus. The two upper centres and the sixth centre—have, on them, the shadow of Brahm.

According to Nanak, true and perfect redemption is possible only by performing the practices of recitation, meditation and Word-Audition, in the prescribed manner, after ascertaining the secrets of the Name of the purely spiritual region. Such a Name and its secrets cannot be found in any scripture and cannot be revealed by any past guru; it can only be revealed by a living preceptor whom Nanak defines as one "who showeth mansions within mansions." Such an adept alone can rouse the spirit and emancipate it from the clutches of mind and body.

V

On this logic, in Nanak's doctrine such acts as going to temples, bathing in rivers, merely reciting the scriptures, observing fasts, giving alms etc. tend to degrade the spirit by further enmeshing it into matter and are, therefore, undesirable. Only those spiritual practices are recommended which help in freeing the spirit from matter by turning it inward and higher. To seek worldly objects even through prayer is a retrograde movement. Ask the Supreme Being for Himself, not anything lower. Seekers of the world are doomed; seekers of paradise are mercenaries; and seekers of the Supreme Being are the blessed ones.

VI

Nanak has frequently used the term Sound or Word. To him, Sound is neither the quality of void or ether, nor it is the result of

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vibratory motion. Even modern science claims that some sixty million years ago there was a mighty explosion which led to the creation of the universe. If Sound was the first manifestation of the Supreme Being, the rest of the creation including ether and other elements must have been created by Sound or Spirit Current. The original Word cannot be regarded as the quality of ether, for it is the life and soul of everything that followed its first manifestation. On the same reasoning, if the Spirit Current was the prime mover and the first impulse which emanated from the Supreme Being, it cannot be held to be the outcome of vibratory motion. Vibratory motion is confined to the second and third grand divisions and is the result of contact of spirit with matter, in its effort to remove the material coating of the spirit in the lower regions. In these regions, various sound currents originate from the vibratory motion and serve the purpose of carrying on the work of creation in various directions below. But the original Sound or Spirit Current is the parent of all motion and forces as well as light, sound, elements etc. which subsequently came into existence in the second and third grand divisions.

VII

Another term often used by Nanak is *Sat* (Truth)—*Sat Pad*, *Sat Purush*, *Sat Nam*, *Sat Desh* etc. By Truth one may mean the essence, spirit, and life of everything that exists or appears to exist, itself unchangeable and immortal. One could also define Truth as the essence of essences, spirit of spirits, omniscient, omnipotent, formless, boundless, unapproachable, unknowable (except by saints), unchangeable, unfathomable, the source and beginning of life, of energy and of everything—perishable or imperishable—an unlimited ocean of love and wisdom, omnipresent but concealed in various coatings except in the highest region, where it can be observed by the visionary power of the spirit. The first definition is applicable to the Truth or rather to the rays which issued forth from the Sun of Truth or the drops from the unbounded Ocean of Truth diffused over all the space comprised within the Universe of Universes ; giving life, power and energy to bodies, existences and appearances. By these rays is meant the spirits residing in all apparent bodies or existences, forming the creation in various spheres in the space, and giving them the power of motion, thought or reason, etc. In short, the whole creation extending from the highest to the lowest sphere, is sustained by the spirits or rays from the Sun of Truth, and is dissolved on the separation of spirits

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from the coatings in which they reside, or in other words, on the severance of the connection between the two.

The second definition points to the source of the above rays or spirits, the Truth of Truths, ever shining forth in its awful majesty and splendour, and directing from its highest abode the course of its rays and controlling the forces which sprang up from their contact with matter and are playing their respective parts in the whole creation in the spheres below. In short, the entire creation which one feels, and sees owes its life and growth to Truth, and is sustained throughout by Truth, and disappears or is dissolved when Truth is withdrawn therefrom.

Nanak also answers the question as to how to attain "Truth". To approach its source, one must first approach and catch its ray or Spirit Current and then follow its course back to its source. The highway lies within the microcosm or the human body. The Spirit Current as well as the currents of other forces (spiritual-material) are flowing from within downward or outward towards external objects ; and to approach their centres one must change the direction of these currents upward or inward to their internal source. As the stream of the spiritual-material forces appertains to sensual desires or worldly greatness, the traveller bound for the Region of Truth, must, of necessity, give up these desires to a certain extent and thus stop its downward flow. It is not necessary that one should altogether withdraw from the world but he should so regulate the course of the various forces as to confine their use to what is absolutely necessary for living on a moderate scale, discarding all sinful thoughts and ideas. Nanak thus gives a call for attending to the True Name :

> O Man ! Remember the True Name. Every moment your age wears off and ultimately you die. You have wasted your youth in sensual pleasures and childhood in ignorance. Even in old age you take no heed ! You are utterly unmindful of the Creator who blessed you with this noble human form. You do not sing even for a while the praises of the One who is the bestower of redemption. Why are you proud of worldly objects ? They do not accompany you after death. Dwell on your Creator ! He alone will keep you company in the end.

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VIII

What, then, according to Nanak, is true religion ? What is the Primary Objective (*Paramarth*) ? True religion, Nanak says, is that which teaches a devotee the method of traversing through the regions where untruth and comparative truth exercise their sway to the Region of Truth. Any religion which treats of rituals and moral principles and does not profess to know or teach the method of reaching the Region of Truth, is a religion built on formal knowledge furnished by revelation of a lower order emanating from the presiding deity of the second or third grand division where relative truth and untruth hold sway.

In other words, activities which are generally held as "good" and "proper" such as reform and uplift of one's country or community (Khalsa) through running educational institutions, agriculture and industry, freeing one's country from foreign rule, organizing community kitchens etc. have nothing to do with religion. The first objective of religion is to take one's spirit to the Region of Truth through Word-Audition. It does not, however, mean that charity or social reform is undesirable. As far as possible one must do good to all, but one should not make it the mission of one's life. Reform of the third grand division is the job of the agents of the deity of this region, and they are born regularly for this purpose.

It is important to remember that the work of salvation can be carried on only through this body, and by staying in the family and carrying on one's profession honestly. The creation was ordained by the Supreme Being for this purpose only. Man, constitutionally, is the only perfect microcosm fit for spiritual progress. He is the crown of species in that he alone has all the spiritual centres potentially alive which can be activated by proper devotion. The case of other entities is, however, different. Their spirituality being small, the downward drain has considerably affected the higher centres, and the subjective functions, specially the power of abstraction, have become quite impaired. In many a case, their heart-centre is the seat of their spirit. But, man is the entity in whom the six sub-divisions of *Brahamand* are reflected in a kinetic form. The apparatus for this reflex action is to be found in the brain and by means of the apertures provided therein which contain Brahamandic potentialities in consequence of the reflex action taking place through them, the spirit of man can, under proper training, get access into *Brahamand*. As *Braha-*

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mand itself is a reflex image of the purely spiritual region, the currents which establish the reflex conditions of *Brahamand* in the human microcosm, are associated with the reflex functions of the purely spiritual region. These functions are also, therefore, represented in the human brain, and apertures are provided therein for communication with and access into the purely spiritual region. Man, from his position in the universe and from the amount of spirituality he possesses, is thus endowed with a cosmos of his own, which is so constructed as to represent all the spheres of the entire creation from the highest spiritual source down to the creationless nether pole, and which possesses such apertures and potentialities as would enable the human entity to reach the highest mansion. In man, therefore, the true microcosm exists, and it is in consequence of this unique possession that he is considered to be superior to angels and the denizens of *Brahamand*.

The spirits of saints often visit the various spheres of *Brahamand* with the object of revealing to the denizens there of the existence and the bliss of the purely spiritual regions. As the denizens of *Brahamand* are highly spiritual and pure, they find no difficulty in comprehending the revelations made to them, and they soon become imbued with a strong desire for reaching the purely spiritual regions. When this desire has become sufficiently developed, their advent into human form takes place. The bliss of *Brahamand* is so ecstatic that it is only the higher spiritual revelation which can generate a desire for this.

IX

It is, therefore, necessary that the devotee takes good care of his body which is the vehicle for spiritual progress. Failure to do this would inevitably mean submission to the series of births and re-births in infernal regions of matter and to the attendant suffering and pain. No amount of regret at the moment of death would be of any avail.

Nanak never deserted his family, nor did he require anyone to do so. On the contrary, he enjoins the advisability of a devotee continuing to live with his family and discharge his professional duties honestly and at the same time secure salvation by earnestly practising devotion. He says: "I met the Perfect Preceptor from whom I learnt the modes of spiritual practice. I attained salvation amid merry-making, eating and drinking."

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X

This, of course, does not mean that a devotee can afford to indulge in carnal pleasures. One must know what pain and pleasure truly mean. The perception by a sentient entity of the forcible ejectment of its sensory currents from the physical or mental planes which they are occupying constitutes the phenomenon of pain. On the contrary, the perception of the concentration of its sensory currents in a physical or mental plane which they are occupying constitutes pleasure. But the state of supreme bliss means total freedom from pain of every description. This is possible only in circumstances which are entirely devoid of physical or mental associations and are of the inherent essence of the spirit force. These circumstances obtain only in the Region of Truth and they can be created only by the preceptor. As Nanak said :

> O Devotee! Mind is difficult to control as it keeps company of mercurial desires, and does not keep itself at peace. Anger has deprived you of your senses! Denied of wisdom you cannot control your mind. Yogis have despaired and also those who mechanically chant the praises of the Lord. When the preceptor is merciful, you will find the way.

XI

The mode of salvation is Word-Audition. In sections 8—11 of the Japji, Nanak says :

> By listening alone you become perfect and pious. Listening does not mean listening to the name of Rama and the so-called religious discourses. By listening is meant listening to the "unstruck melody."
>
> It is because of that Sound that the grand-divisions exist. Due to that Sound alone, Satan cannot exert his force. On hearing Thy name, the agents of Death take to their heels. With the help of Name you cross the vast ocean of life. It is by virtue of Sound that a devotee is always happy. As he hears that Sound all his sins come to an end.
>
> On hearing that Sound you attain the status of gods. It is due to Sound that celestial beings, who sing songs in Lord's praise,

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exist. By means of Sound you come to know of the secrets of the human microcosm. The scriptures have been evolved by Sound.

By listening to the "unstruck melody" you attain reality, contentment and knowledge. By hearing it, you imbibe the benefit of all the pilgrimages. By listening to it and singing its praise, you get honour at the Lord's court.

By listening to it, you become the treasure house of all virtues, and attain the status of the preceptor. By listening to it, the blind find the path, and cross the ocean of existence.

Elsewhere, he says :

Do you know the distinctive marks of the Lord's mansion and the Sound resounding there ? The "unstruck melody" emanating from the Lord Himself, is reverberating with refulgence ! "Unstruck melody" is the capital, the key to which is in the hands of my preceptor.

On meeting the preceptor my wanderings end, and I gain access to the Region of Truth. I treasure the Name, utter the Name, remain merged in the Name. Nectar is the food in that region, and incessant is the resonance of "unstruck melody."

Recitation of the Lord's Name and listening to the "unstruck melody" bring eternal happiness ! The denizens of the Region of Truth are in a state of perpetual bliss and their union with the Lord is everlasting.

Those who have been blessed with Thy mercy are absorbed in Thy Name. He indeed is happy who has discovered the "unstruck melody" within himself. Without the perfect preceptor, the "unstruck melody" can never be heard and a perfect preceptor is he who can reveal the secret of the Five Sounds.

When the mind gets detached from the world, the spirit is awakened and hears the Sound within.

In the 16th section, Nanak refers to the Five Sounds :

The Five Sounds lend grace and splendour to the gate of the beloved. They are ever resounding within every human being

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as different sounds with distinctive features in different spiritual regions. But one will come to recognize them only when the preceptor is pleased to reveal them.

In the 19th section, he says : "The Supreme Being created nothing but Name and no place is devoid of it." In the 20th section, he declares : "If hands, feet, body and clothes become dirty they can be washed with water. If intellect is tarnished by sins, it can be purified by Name...There is no need to describe the good and bad deeds of persons given to virtue and vice because such actions are being recorded all the time. It is also a fact that man's good and evil deeds are too numerous to be described. A record of such actions is kept by the angels. Man reaps the fruit of his actions. It is ordained by the Supreme Being." In the 21st section, he says :

> Only an infinitesimal iota of honour will be attained by going on pilgrimage, practising penance, showing kindness and giving in charity. Real pilgrimage is listening to Name, pondering over it and engendering love for it. This will wash away all the sins.
>
> Thou art, O Lord, the treasure-house of all virtues and I am full of vices ! Without love for Thee and without singing Thy praise, devotion cannot be attained.
>
> Brahm says "abide in the region of Brahm!" Brahmins say "may you fare well !" Saints say "have an abiding zeal for the Name of the Graceful Region of Truth !"

In the Japji, Nanak describes Word as *Hukam* (command or law). In the second section, he says :

> At the command of the Supreme Being everything which has a form or shape, comes into being. It is beyond the ken of human intellect to say when, how and why that command was ordained. All living beings are created under His command. It is also by His command that each acquires proficiency. At His command one is wealthy and the other, poor ; one is born in a high family and the other, in the lowly. It is at His preordained command that the world undergoes pain and pleasure. At His command, some get prize and prominence and others are led astray. No one is outside the purview of His command. Whosoever recognizes His command and

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abides by it, gives up ego. He does not say that he has achieved this or that but that everything, be it good or bad, happens at the pleasure of the Supreme Being !

Elsewhere Nanak says that whatever exists in this creation is Sound—it is the cause of all creation and dissolution :

Through the Word is the creation and dissolution ;
Through the Word is the evolution of creation again.[2]
He is the wife, He is the husband;
He is the Cause of all.[3]

In *Asa* Nanak says :

You are the Supreme Being ;
The great One without a second.
You yourself as sound pervade everything ;
Whatever You wish comes to pass.[4]

In the *Janam Sakhi*, Nanak says that Sound sustains the whole universe :

The Word is the life of sky and earth ;
From its refulgence all take birth,
And all creation sings.
O Nanak, in all souls that be,
This heavenly power rings.[5]

And, in *Malar Var* :

He creates Himself and knows Himself,
He separates the earth and the skies;
He spreads the canopy of the heavens,
He upholds the skies without pillars ;
He makes the word His insignia,
He creates the sun and moon and illumines them
By His own light.[6]

Sound is of two kinds—manifest and inner. The latter is superconscious and infinite. It can neither be heard, nor spoken, nor can it be written. It is the unwritten law, the unspoken language. It is all-pervasive and can be experienced only by the spirit. In the phrase of Pythagoras, it is the "music of the spheres"—the *Logos* or the Tao. The Bible says :

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> In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him ; and without Him was not anything made that was made.[7]

And, again :

> The grass withereth, the flower fadeth ; but the Word of our God shall stand for ever.[8]

According to Holy Quran, God said "Be, and it was." In other words, the Word appeared and the whole of the universe came into being. The Persian Sufis have called it *wadan*—the divine Sound. They say :

> If He had not thought of manifesting,
> There would have been no Sound or world.

Muslim saints have called the inner music the Voice of God and Celestial Sound. Its practice is known as the King of Repetitions, and has been known to a number of sects of Persian mystics.

It is said that Prophet Mohammad heard the "unstruck melody" for fifteen years :

> When Mohammad reached the age of forty, the signs of his having received the revelation began to appear. According to tradition, he used to hear the Celestial Sound for fifteen years before he received the revelation. He often had divine dreams and he saw different lights seven years before the revelation. Two years before, he went to the cave at Hara and practised there for a month.[9]

There are ten doors of the body of which nine are outer (apertures) and the tenth is inner (the sixth centre).

> The fort of the body has nine doors,
> The tenth is kept secret ;
> The secret door will not open,
> Only the Name of the Master can open it.[10]

So long as the spirit wanders in the outer nine doors, it is not

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able to have a glimpse of the Lord's feet. When it reaches the sixth centre or the third-eye, the devotee can hear the Lord's Word. This Sound transcends the tubular vessels on the left, right and middle sides of the body. These three currents originally started from the top of the *Brahamand* as one and when issued from the lower end of the Curved Tunnel got separated into three subtle currents. Nanak says :—

He knows Ida, Pingla and Sushmana, (*the three currents*
He sees for himself the unseeable ; *named above*)
O Nanak ! The true Master takes one beyond them,
And merges him in the Sound.[11]

The yogis asked Nanak :

Where is the home of the Word,
Through which is one ferried across the sea of existence ?
The air is said to be of ten kinds,
Which one of these sustains it ?[12]

Nanak replied :

The Word is inside us, it is invisible,
Wherever I look, I find it;
The air issues from the void,
The Word is not sustained by anything.[13]

Once the devotee hears the Sound, he gets a glimpse of light which purges him of darkness and the dirt of past actions. His devotion is cemented :

When the mind was attuned to the Word,
It became detached and dispassionate ;
There appeared light within and from it emanated,
The heavenly Sound which made me a devotee of the True Lord.[14]

One cannot hear the Word or see the Light with the external ears and eyes. But Sound is prior to Light ; it is the Truth, for it never perishes. And yet the people are unaware of it as "the deer knows not the musk and wanders in delusion."[15] The Word is the Lord's Command. It is the highest essence, inexhaustible, limitless, all-pervading, all-knowing, all-powerful. By hearing, the mind is

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controlled and is rid of lust, anger, ego, attachment, depression, delusion, desires and worldly hopes :

Within me rages the fires of passion,
Bless me with the Word that I am cooled ;
My body and mind are immensely comforted,
And rid of my maladies, I sleep in peace.[16]

And,

He who contemplates on the preceptor's Word,
Becomes an ocean of coolness ;
His egotism is killed, and release is obtained.[17]

Also,

The fire of desires is quenched by the Word,
Which washes off the sense of duality, the natural way ;
The Word burns all the hopes and desires,
And one dwells on and repeats only Lord's Name.
The Word burns all attachment and delusion,
It makes one dear to the Master ;
And one's body and mind are in bloom.[18]

Word banishes the fear and pain of death and breaks the vicious circle of transmigration. It resolves the knots of the inner path and destroys the effect of actions of previous births. By the practice of Word-Audition one realizes the true self and transcends the domain of the three attributes and time. The devotee goes into trance in the Void and the third-eye opens. Word is the source of all knowledge and wisdom :

The "unstruck melody" breaks all the worldly bonds,
And the devotee realizes the Lord ;[19]
The melodious, unending music is heard,
Only by following the directions of the Master ;[20]
The unending music is wonderfully pleasing,
It is the supreme gift of the Perfect Master ;[21]
O Nanak ! He who has the Perfect Master,
Hears the unending music.[22]
The "unstruck melody" resounds at my true Home,
I sit on the same bed with my Lord ;
O Nanak ! I have found the Lord,
He is my spouse and I live in peace.[23]

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The "unstruck melody" can only be heard by the true disciple and not by a sophist or an egotist :

Lo, the Lord has manifested His wonder !
And I hear the "unstruck melody" ;
The self-willed have strayed from the path,
To God-oriented ones the mystery is revealed ;
The Creator produces the cause that causes all of this.[24]

In the Japji, Nanak says : "The disciple who moulds himself according to the preceptor's behest, attains the form of Word."[25] He remains absorbed in the remembrance of the Supreme Being.

XII

How can the Word or Name be realized ? Nanak says that the key is held by the preceptor who alone can reveal it. It requires total surrender by the devotee to him and regular attendance of the congregation.

The spirit was sent into this world to get rid of its coating of matter. But when it came here it lost all recollection of the Lord and it now applies itself entirely to worldly pursuits. Those who remain steadfast in their devotion to the preceptor make the most of this world, besides attaining spiritual benefit. Everything except the preceptor is unconscious. By worshipping the conscious you attain the conscious ; but if you worship the unconscious, you slip into the unconscious.

Nanak insists that devotion to the preceptor precedes the Name. After initiation by him into the secret of the Holy Name, the disciple should do his best to recite it and continue to develop love for him. Nanak says that in this age the place of the old pilgrimages and vows has been taken by resignation to the will of the preceptor. He alone can control the wild desires of the mind.

Nanak also enjoins that if one wishes to succeed in the worship of the preceptor, one must give up the worship of the world ; it is impossible to succeed in both.

XIII

The scriptures have mentioned the span of life of various deities. Even incarnations, who came to this world, were subject to

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death. How can their images be imperishable and fit for worship ? People could have derived some benefit if they had contemplated upon the real form of these deities. By contemplation upon the real forms of incarnations access could be gained into their regions. But should not one aim at the highest region ? The effort required and the method of worship is the same in both cases, but there is a world of difference in the results. Although Nanak enjoined upon his devotees to worship the Supreme Being only, it did not involve opposition to the lesser deities. On the contrary, followers of the Supreme Being have to revere all the deities in their journey to the Region of Truth. It is imperative, however, that the traveller understands the distinctive features of every intervening stage so that he is not beguiled by the agents of lesser deities. This understanding can be bestowed only by the living preceptor, and without it he will neither be able to develop abiding faith in the Supreme Being, nor acquire the necessary impetus to go up to the highest stage.

Regarding various incarnations not being the Supreme Being, their own worshippers admit that they appeared, much after the creation. Who it was that people worshipped before they appeared ? It was *Om* whose worship was prevalent in the earliest times, as the Upanishads affirm. Gradually, people gave up this worship and took to pilgrimages, idol worship and the worship of incarnations and prophets. But this last remained confined to the countries where they were born ; elsewhere they are neitheir known nor worshipped. The worship of the Supreme Being alone, Nanak says, can be accepted everywhere by everybody.

The incarnations, moreover, could redeem only those who lived during their regime and confer salvation only upto their own regions. Those who worshipped them after their departure could neither achieve physical and mental purification nor salvation. The same applies to the followers of Nanak also. Those who adopt his faith only formally and do not seek the living preceptor and perform the spiritual practices prescribed by him cannot achieve salvation.

A living preceptor is imperative for Word-Audition. The notion that God Himself or Nature can play the role of the preceptor is misleading. Nature can be the teacher of trees, birds and beasts, but never of men. A calf one month old will, if thrown into water,

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easily swim across it. But a human being will drown unless it has been taught swimming by another human being. Man is the crown of species but for everything he is capable of attaining, he needs a teacher. Now, if a teacher is required for worldly disciplines, how much more is he required for spiritual practices all of which are inward and not subject to any of the senses ?

Secondly, it is only the living preceptor who can give the devotee the strength to deal effectively with the temptations and the obstacles placed on the way by Satan, whose sole objective is to retain the spirit within the net of transmigration and prevent it from gaining access into the Region of Truth. Satan is devoid of mercy and only knows ruthless justice. And, thirdly, the living preceptor alone can instruct the devotee in the technique of Word-Audition, which cannot be described adequately through the written word, and ensure his progress. He alone can exterminate the effect of past deeds.

The saints withdraw their spirituality at the time of departure, from the various planes with which it was associated during their lifetime here, and regain their original place. Departure from this earth, in their case, is not like that of ordinary humanity. It takes place when the purpose, for which their advent was ordained, has been fulfilled. Their spirituality, while they are on this plane, is so great that whatever object comes in contact with them is spiritualized to some extent, and contact with such objects is beneficial ; but the kinetic energy of the spiritual force of the sphere from which they had sprung up ceases with their departure. And, since the law is that the spirituality assigned to the various planes in creation does not act on a lower plane save by percolation, which allows passage to a fractional part alone of the spirituality, the adepts after departure do not, in contravention of this rule, extend the same spiritual assistance as they afforded during their lifetime. Of course, disembodied spirits, who have been liberated from the coarse physical bondage by death, but whose worldly desires and mundane affinities are still strong often hold communion from the astral plane (which is associated with the earth and is situated in the ethereal plane) or dabble otherwise in worldly matters, for good or for bad. The teachings of Kabir and Nanak, therefore, lay special stress upon the necessity of a living adept for practical spiritual training. The science of the spiritual force is highly technical and subtle, requiring regular daily training on planes with which the devotee is unacquainted. *According to the holy books is,*

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therefore, not sufficient for spiritual experimentations. The successful performance of such experimentations requires constant aid from an adept. The root of all evil is egotism which means a consciousness that whatever is being done, temporal or spiritual, is the outcome of the power that the actor possesses within himself, ignoring the source from which that power was derived. So long as this function remains, a translation of the spiritual entity is impossible to higher planes, and the disciple will rotate around his mental ego, which he considers to be his inner self. The adept who acts from higher planes can alone help one overcome this great impediment. Such an assistance comes unsolicited at moments when the disciple is in despair, induced by the futility of his efforts. The frequent occurrence of such a condition during the course of spiritual training of a devotee, gradually introduces a change in his nature. Confidence gives way to humility ; and the devotee, turns his attention to higher quarters within himself for assistance. This exercise gradually results in a change of the plane of action. When the powers of the higher planes are developed to a degree, the devotee is enraptured by the bliss and enlargement of the scope of vision he has acquired. He now becomes truly conscious, by personal experience, of the evils concealed in the folds and crevices of his ego and also of the efficacy of devotion. *Such pure and true devotion, which leads the devotee rapidly towards the object of his devotion can be generated by a living adept alone.* Devotees who have made some advance can render assistance to others by sharing their internal experiences, but the ascension of a spirit from its ordinary seat to higher planes is possible only when a living adept is present. It is not necessary that the disciple should always be in the personal company of the adept. So long as the adept is alive, his spirituality is kinetic on higher planes, and he can extend help even when the disciple is away from him. The absence of adepts has been the cause of deterioration of internal progress in all faiths whether they appertain to the second grand division or the first. Uninterrupted internal progress is only possible when the succession of one adept after another is continuous, or when it takes place at very frequent intervals. During the gap, the spirituality, which had already been gathered, consolidates as it were, and at the advent of the next adept it is fit for further exaltation from the foundations already laid.

Nanak says that the company of saints has a great effect on the

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performance of a devotee. It increases the stock of his spirituality. Their current of spirituality permeates the devotee and gradually makes him like itself. With every contact, purification of the devotee's spirit-current takes place. This is the secret of the redeemer of the fallen, and constitutes the preceptor's eminence.

The Supreme Being, sitting in His abode, can neither extend His benign influence nor impart His instructions to human beings. Were it possible, there would have been no need for evolving the creation. The Supreme Being can instruct only when He assumes human form and operates at the same level. In the form of the preceptor he pulls the spirit of the devotee upward, little by little, till it reaches the Region of Truth and attains supreme peace and contentment.

XIV

Nanak says that no mantra can act as the preceptor. According to Hindu scriptures, the root of winning over a god (*siddha*) is in that god ; the root of that god is in the mantra ; the root of mantra is in initiation ; and the root of initiation is in the preceptor. As the *Mundamala Tantra* puts it : "Mantra is born of the preceptor and the deity is born of the mantra, so that, O Beauteous One, the preceptor stands in the place of a grandfather to the deity that is to be won over !" If a person, without being initiated by a preceptor, picks up a mantra from a book he will never be able to realize its power. One cannot argue that because when a lamp is lighted a man can see things for himself, it is therefore not necessary to light the lamp.

The living preceptor alone can protect the seeker from the six worldly dangers—lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride and envy. Speaking of the vital need of a living preceptor, Nanak says :

> None can help you except the preceptor. Family, property and other possessions which you consider as yours do not accompany you in death. Why do you then cling to these? By the grace of the preceptor my spirit rose like a kite and getting across the eight regions saw the Supreme Being. He neither has nor is without, form. The Vedas, *Omkar* and Brahm do not have access there. He is known only to saints. The precep-

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tor alone knows the path and He graciously initiated me into the secrets, and I was able to see Him.

XV

But, what is the hallmark of the preceptor ? Saints are known by the distinctive fact that they always inculcate faith in the internal worship of the Supreme Being. Apparently, there may be little difference between the preceptor and a pseudo-guru because a pseudo-guru may appear to be pious and may be learned and a fine orator and may yet be fake! Behind a noble visage could be a womanizer. The real test lies in the preceptor's knowledge of Word-Audition, his capacity to enable the disciple to get over the sub-divisions of the third and second grand divisions, to emancipate him from the various bonds, and to protect him from temptations. The preceptor, unlike a pseudo-guru is not interested in the devotee's material status or physical charm: he is not affected by praise or censure, and he shuns propaganda and miracles. The disciple feels the preceptor's presence in meditation; that is his magic, which a pseudo-guru can never perform! The preceptor's forehead and eyes reflect his spiritual power so that when the seeker looks into them, the effect is immediate. The preceptor eats and sleeps very little and he has nothing to hide. Shunning gurudom, he never tries to groom his children for succession. Politics or purely temporal affairs have no place in his congregation. Gimmicks such as "So you have come, my child ? I was very anxious for you. I know about your troubles by means of yoga !" are the typical trademark of a swindler.

The preceptor is not here to set up a state within a state, to reform society or to fight political struggles for the freedom of the country. He is not discouraged by slander. The real test of the preceptor is that by serving him, the devotee begins to identify his dark spots, thus taking the first step towards their eradication. Gradually, the devotee understands the transitoriness of the world, and love for the Lord begins to grow within him.

Seekers of the material world can never correspond with the spirit-current manifest in the preceptor, dominated by carnal desires as they are. Similarly, pseudo-gurus fail to impress the genuine seeker. In fact, the preceptor prefers that the seekers of mammon should not enter his circle. To achieve this, he invites criticism by

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doing or saying things deliberately which the worldly-wise do not like. Such malignant criticism acts like a watchman.

XVI

Nanak commenced his spiritual task while young and insisted that the seekers also begin at an early age. Who is there so perverse as to start the digging of a well to extinguish a fire which has already caught his house ? Nanak said that old age waits like a tigress with open mouth to swallow the human being ! As water leaks from a leather vessel, so is our energy depleted every moment through the nine apertures in the body. Diseases constantly inflict wounds like an enemy laying seige to a house, and death hangs overhead like a sword. Prosperity is like a dream ; youth is shortlived like a flower ; and life passes like a flash. Most of a man's life is spent in sleeping, childhood, eating and drinking, disease, old age and affairs of the world. And yet a person cherishes the fleeting world, seeks benefit from things which do him injury, accepts the impermanent as permanent ! Hence, he says, get up right now while the senses and faculties are still intact.

XVII

Nanak holds the living preceptor as greater than God. The immanent God is powerless to take man out of the abysmal ocean of this world. The immanent creator is like a lamp which throws light all around. In that light thieves steal, drunkards drink, the licentious indulge in sensual pleasures, and the devotee meditates. But, the light itself is powerless to help anyone. However, when the immanent Supreme Being incarnates as the preceptor, he enables man to see His real form and takes him to the Region of Truth. In the company of the preceptor, thieves stop stealing, the addicts give up wine and the sensualists, their vices.

XVIII

Witness another aspect of it. It is said that devotion to God brings about salvation. But where is one to find the immanent God ? He is invisible and formless ! When devotion to him is spoken of, he must have a body. Who is such a God, with a body that is visible ? Nanak says, the preceptor is God in human form and his protection should be sought, for he and God are one. The worship

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of the preceptor is, therefore, worship of the Supreme Being. But he alone will be able to recognize the preceptor who is distressed by the afflictions of the world, while he who finds pleasure in them, can never know him. Nanak insists that one has to find the clue to the preceptor within oneself :

> Why do you search for God in the woods ? The Supreme Being abides within all, as fragrance does in the flower and reflection in the mirror. He is within and without. This is the wisdom imparted by the preceptor. Without knowledge of your inner self, the moss of doubt cannot be wiped off !

XIX

According to the ancient Indian sage, Vashishta, there are eight types of bondages—pride of family ; high caste ; official position ; fear of public opinion ; attachment to family and property ; partiality for wrong beliefs and inferior religions ; craving for worldly pleasures ; and egotism. The adept whose association weakens these bondages and develops a yearning for the Supreme Being, will one day, liberate the seeker from them. This is the only true mark of a saint, whose grace is of capital importance to the devotee.

XX

But, what is Grace ? In *Sri Rag* Nanak says : "Thy Grace is my family" and "when our body is content with Truth, God's Grace is upon us."[26] *Sri Rag Var Shloka* says : "If the Lord so wills, He turns a crow into a swan." And *Asa Mi Var Shloka* affirms : "Of what avail is that gift which we receive through our own efforts ? A blessing is that which the Lord in His mercy blesses us with." In Japji, Nanak says :

> If it is the Supreme Being's pleasure that I should make ablution at a place of pilgrimage, I will do so ; but if that does not please Him, what shall I gain by such ablution ?...To wander about for years at places of pilgrimage is useless...
>
> In the entire creation, no one gets anything without Grace... Grace and mercy lead us to endeavour, and endeavour attracts further Grace and mercy !

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> Your intellect is endowed with gems but they will become manifest when you heed the instructions of the preceptor...It is he who will reveal the Supreme Being...[27]

In section 7 of the Japji, the vital importance of the preceptor's grace is underlined :

> A person may live for ages...and become renowned...; and if there is love for the Supreme Being in his heart but the preceptor's grace is not with him he will be considered as having no merit in the court of the Supreme Being...As punishment, such a person takes birth as a lowly worm in his next life.[28]

Nanak says that without grace, action in the direction of true salvation will not be possible, and without such action (*Karni*), grace will not be available. As between them, it is grace *per se* that is paramount but if one relies on grace alone, one is likely to become slack.

XXI

Action means, in the main, service to the preceptor, recitation of name as revealed by him, living an honest life, curbing the six worldly dangers (elaborated earlier), attending the congregation daily and cogitating on what is said there. Without cogitation, implementation of the preceptor's teachings is not possible.

Such action will root out worldly desires and the devotee will become dead to the world, even while living :

> Those who are dead to their self and so alive, taste the nectar ;
> Their mind, through the preceptor's Word, is attuned to the Lord's love.[29].

The true disciple is "dead" in the sense that he has no will of his own ; he acts as the preceptor directs. So long as this condition is not acquired, the disciple should consider himself "alive" *ie*, worldly, not detached.

XXII

All spiritual acts must be done without ostentation. Hypocrisy is antithetical to grace. A seeker has no place for those things which God has driven out of His realm. Any desire for them blocks the path to emancipation. Nanak says :

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The egocentrics invite trouble upon themselves because they leave their homes and start peeping into others'. Abandoning righteousness they fall victims to viciousness. They wander and study religious books but their desires increase. Though blessed with human form they eat like brutes and fail to perceive Name. They become ascetics by dyeing their clothes in ochre and collecting alms. They make a pretence of imparting knowledge to the world though they are themselves deluded. Without a preceptor, they remain ignorant of the fire (spirituality) within, and search for it, outside, to warm themselves. Salvation cannot be attained without devotion, and devotion comes from service to the preceptor. On the contrary, egocentrics slander the preceptor and go to hell. They make pilgrimages but their illusions remain. Without the preceptor's protection, the dirt of sins cannot be washed off. Smearing their bodies with ash, they pretend to be holy. But the Supreme Being is omniscient. They read scriptures without understanding them, and tell lies unhesitatingly. This is not the way of a devotee ! How can they get happiness without reciting the Great Name ! The hypocrites shave off their heads and tie their hair in a knot and proclaim that they have renounced the world. They observe silence and become proud of this practice. But, being ignorant of their spirit, their minds wander. Having abandoned their wives, they cast eyes on the wives of others. They take disciples but have no inkling of name. Even in meditation, their inner self is full of carnal desires. Such people will be devoured by death and will descend into the animal kingdom !

On the contrary, a true ascetic serves the preceptor. He eats only that which comes his way. Whether a householder or a mendicant, the devotee is always engaged in curbing evil tendencies, and becomes free from desires. He is engrossed in the meditation of the only one and is absorbed in Word-Audition. The true disciple understands the real nature of mind and is, therefore, able to control its wantonness.

Even gods have been meditating on Thy Name. Thy refulgence is visible in all the species of life, in heaven and hell. You

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cannot be redeemed without Name. Hence enshrine true Name in your heart !

The root of all bonds is in the ego. When you grasp the principal beads of the rosary, all of the beads are grasped ; but if the cord is withdrawn all the beads are scattered. One who enjoys the grace of the living preceptor is able to remove this cord of vanity and obtains freedom from all bonds. Such persons are making the best use of their human frames.

And ego, Nanak says, cannot be destroyed by reading scriptures.[30]

XXIII

What is real congregation (*Satsang*) according to Nanak ? It is attendance on the preceptor (in whom the current of Truth or Name is manifest), hearing his discourses, and performing acts of faith and charity inspired by love for the Supreme Being. Internally, it is the application of mind and spirit to the Sound Current at the time of practice of Word-Audition and an effort to raise them to higher regions. The love of the Lord implies a fervent desire to attain the Supreme Being, to the exclusion of all worldly desires. It does not consist in hearing stories, philosophical discourses and planning political moves.[31]

Congregation must be held under the guidance of the preceptor or one who has gained access, beyond the sixth centre or the genuine devotees. Attending such a congregation, like alchemy, transmutes the iron of the mind into gold.[32] Nanak says that if a devotee is able to attain the company of the current of Truth even for a moment he will escape the net of transmigration.

XXIV

Making obeisance before an inanimate object, whether it be an idol or the Granth Sahib is not true congregation. The so-called followers of Guru Nanak are doing exactly the same. They keep the Granth Sahib in silken cloth and adore it like an idol. Ripley's *Believe It or Not* has this to say about it, under the caption Mr Book :

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The most revered book in the world is the Granth Sahib (literally Mr Book). It is the holy book of the Sikhs, a religious sect of India. This book is treated as though it were a living, oriental king. It has a retinue of servants who fan it all day with golden handled fans of peacock feathers. An orchestra plays sweet music before it to banish boredom. Sweets are offered to it continuously for its sustenance.

The famous Golden Temple of Amritsar, center of the Sikh religious worship, was built for the express purpose of housing this book. The Temple is of marble encased in heavily gilt copper and cost $ 40,000,000 to build. It is the costliest book cover in the world.[33]

XXV

There are some people who join the congregation as fault-finders or sightseers; there are others who are only self-seekers. They remain so long as there is hope of their desire being fulfilled. Once it is met or it appears that it will not be met, they leave. Then, there are people who, in the beginning appear to have no worldly desires. But in reality, these cravings remain hidden and as soon as the effect of the company of Truth starts operating, they are roused. This awakening of cravings creates problems and many of such entrants, instead of persevering, quit. In some cases, doubts as to the usefulness of the practice of Word-Audition, genuineness of the preceptor, uselessness of worldly goods, or doubts even about the existence of God arise. Sometimes, the new entrants begin to malign the senior devotees for various things which they do; usually such activity is inspired by a misunderstanding on the part of the new entrants. A certain amount of perseverance is always required to overcome the initial problems of adjustment, and the new entrant must remember that success in spiritual matters depends on one's title (*samskara*), and the company of the preceptor and a true longing for the Supreme Being are the means to it.

XXVI

Usually, the new entrant, experiences some bliss, if he is sincere. The congregation also gives support to facilitate adjustment. This done, the devotee has to subject himself willingly to the disciplining of mind and body—the mending process. This process is of three

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orders. The highest form is when the preceptor himself does it; in the second category, mending is done partly by the preceptor and partly through conflicts within the congregation; and the worst form of mending is brought about through worldly strifes.

One cannot ascend from one plane to the higher till as a result of mending at the lower plane, the ego thereof is loosened and demolished. As a result of constant mending, pure spirit emerges in its entirety, till it merges into the Supreme Being.

The real test of the seeker in this process of correction is that instead of feeling piqued at the attendant discomforts, he feels elevated as the evil effect of past deeds is neutralized. He becomes malleable in the hands of his preceptor. When the followers cease to have this ability of putting up with the rigours of correction process, the preceptor generally departs from this world. The next incarnation occurs only when at least a few people develop yearning of required intensity for the Supreme Being and are prepared to get their angularities corrected. The true seeker is "enthusiastic", ie, full of *theos* or God and is not enmeshed in carnal desires.

Nanak insisted on his devotees to live the full-blooded life of a householder because mending then becomes easier and faster. He enjoined the following precautions : to earn honestly; to eat sparsely and only vegetarian and light food; to avoid the food offered by a dishonest person; to find always time for meditation; to keep away from such entertainments as tend to rouse carnal passions; not to permit any outward activity or incident which could leave a deep impression on the mind; to ensure that the aim is true and firm; and to have affection for each other.

By observing these precautions, a seeker can derive the utmost benefit from the company of the preceptor. His nature will be transformed, which is normally not possible except through the process of transmigration. This transformation which occurs as a result of the company of the preceptor will be permanent, unlike the transformation which is the outcome of the company of worldly people who profess morality and social ethics.

In a real congregation the seeker gets all the four conditions required for spiritual progress—true love, true master, true company and true Name.

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XXVII

According to Nanak there are three kinds of action : the acts performed by a person in his present life; the acts performed in the past or present life, the fruit of which is to be reaped in the present life; the unripe acts done in the past and present lives, the result of which is to be experienced in future lives.

In order to escape the effects of deeds in the first category the devotee should leave the result of every effort, spiritual or temporal, to the Will of the Supreme Being.

As regards the second sort, the effect of the acts performed in the past or present life will be much less in the case of a devotee who has practised the withdrawal of the spirit current by Word-Audition and the company of the preceptor.

The unripe acts, according to Nanak, can be quite easily disposed off during the practice of Word-Audition. There are two sorts of impressions made on the mind's atmosphere, viz., (1) those produced by external objects when they come into contact with the senses; and (2) those produced by desires and various thoughts springing up from time to time in the mind. These impressions are strong or feeble according to the intensity or weakness of desire and thought, or the force or indifference with which the senses grasp the external objects.

When a devotee is traversing the mental sphere on his journey homeward, these impressions are vivified by the power of spirit and appear to him as real objects; they engage or attract his attention and detain him for sometime, but as the devotee is forewarned not to busy himself with these impressions, he sooner or later breaks his connection with them and proceeds onwards whereby the spirit current is withdrawn from the above sphere and the said impressions rendered lifeless and incapable of producing any effect on the devotee when he returns to his seat in the body, viz., the pupil of the eye, after completing his devotional practice for the day.

Obviously, the effect of unripe acts is nearly obliterated in a short while, instead of occupying years, if the seeker has not been practising Word-Audition. Thus, the company of the preceptor is the only instrument for nullifying the effects of actions past, present or future.

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XXVIII

The congregation, to Nanak, is the cradle of love and devotion to the Supreme Being. In the preceptor's company one gets the opportunity of serving him and fellow devotees. This service is rendered by body, mind, material resources and spirit. It constiutes the festivals of the disciple. Sitting at his feet is the pilgrimage. Running errands for him is the holy journey. Listening to his sermons is the feast and accepting his commands, the dress. Following the spiritual technique as prescribed by him is his solemn duty.

The preceptor trains the disciple's ears through the five sounds; eyes by concentrating on his internal and outer form ; and tongue through silent recitation of the name (*ajaapa jaap*). Other instruments take care of themselves, once these three major ones are tamed. These meditational devices open the gates of true knowledge and wisdom. That is the real miracle of congregation.

The worldly people cannot stay in the congregation because their aim is to get into the Brahm who desired to have his own creation as he could not respond to the attraction of the Supreme Being. Having turned his back on the Region of Truth, he had to descend below, taking the current of spirits loaded with pre-creational seeds of action, to the second and third grand divisions. As soon as the spirits got into the company of body and mind—his principal agents ---they got tied up in the knot of three strands. The three strands are mind, body (matter) and consciousness. Spirit now became the prisoner of Brahm whose vested interest is to keep the knot intact and prevent the spirit from reverting to the Region of Truth. This he does by involving man in the network of actions all of which flowed from the pre-creational folds. Nanak began the process of untying the knot and liberating the spirit from the control of mind and body.

That being the game, Brahm, from time to time, began to send down incarnations like tortoise, fish, bear, half man-half lion, dwarf, Parshurama, Rama, Krishna and Buddha with the purpose of keeping proper balance between what he considered to be good and evil. His agents, viz., the trinity of the Creator, the Sustainer, and the Destroyer (Brahma-Vishnu-Mahesh) supervised by his deputy,

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Niranjan, got down to the business of creation and dissolution of the regions under their control.

The agents of Brahm occasionally sent prophets to found new religions. These religions lead to the centre of the various regions under their control. They produce mutual conflicts so that human beings may remain confused about the truth ; quite naturally, they do not give any clue to the Supreme Being, let alone indicating the path leading to Him.

Nanak, therefore, repudiates the doctrine that all faiths lead to the same God. They all do lead to the same God, namely, Brahm; but none of them leads to the Creator of Brahm—the Supreme Being. The spirits loyal to Brahm are subject to 25 realities and are under the control of mind, body and the three qualities (*gunas*), namely, potential consciousness (*satoguna*), activity (*rajoguna*) and restraint (*tamoguna*) which respectively reflect the qualities of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh and under the operation of the three chronic miseries viz., mental pain or worry, physical ailments, and trouble ensuing from worldly conflicts and the functioning of matter. The causes of these miseries are :

(1) internal, such as sickness, from intrinsic causes and disorders of body or mind ;

(2) external, such as accidents, from extrinsic causes, resulting from other men, animals, or inanimate objects ;

(3) acts of gods, from supernatural causes, such as the influence of the atmosphere or the planets.

The twenty-five realities are :

(1) Cosmic Spirit, Self (*Purusha*) ;
(2) Cosmic Substance, Not-Self (*Prakriti*) ;
(3) Cosmic Intelligence (*Mahat*) ;
(4) Individualing Principle (*Ahamkara*) ;
(5) Cosmic Mind (*Manas*) ;
(6—15) the ten Abstract Sense Powers (*Indriyans*) ;
(16—20) the five Subtle Elements (*Tanmatras*) ;
(21—25) the five Sense Particulars (*Mahabhutas*).

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Even if persons, whose object is to achieve the Brahm, enter the congregation they will feel like fish out of water. The living preceptor alone can plant the seed of devotion in such souls. Devotion in Nanak is not like the devotion stated in any other faith because the doer here is not mind or body but the spirit ; the aim is not Brahm but the Region of Truth ; the vehicle is not scriptures and other traditional practices but Word-Audition as prescribed by the living preceptor. It is he alone who is entitled to *arti*.

XXIX

In *Rag Dhanasari* Guru Nanak spells out the details of his concept of *arti*. The word is derived from *Aa*=come + *rut*=be merged. The term *arti* means the essay to extricate the spirit from the clutches of mind and body and making it move upward on the current of Name.

According to Nanak, a thousand currents have issued forth from the Region of the Thousand-Petalled Lotus, below which there are eighty-four currents, and further down, numerous currents have emerged and all the ramifications of the third grand division have spread out. Through these multifarious currents, the spirit has got diffused. This is the root cause of human misery. There is no happiness in this region though an illusion of happiness has been created, and swayed by that, man seeks pleasure in worldly objects. To extricate one's attention from these currents and to bring them to the sixth ganglion is to perform *arti*. When a focus is formed at the sixth ganglion, illusions vanish and impure and fickle mind of the third grand division is cast off and the spiritual mind of the second grand division is awakened. From this point, till the spirit reaches the top of the second grand division, the spiritual mind will accompany the spirit in its journey toward the Region of Truth. However, the spiritual mind cannot travel further than the top of the second grand division, and the spirit is now liberated from its clutches. This whole process is the *arti* of Nanak's concept.

Conceptually, *arti* means that the spirit goes round and round the Supreme Being in adoration. While performing *arti* the spirit also ascends in a roundabout motion. It descended dancing ; it will ascend in the same manner. This roundabout motion will continue up to the region where the centrifugal force originated. When it reaches the Spirit Sphere it will experience the whiffs and waves

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curling over from the ocean of love of the Region of Truth, where there is no motion. When it has completely merged in the Supreme Being, it will acquire all knowledge, all science.

The object of performing *arti* is that giving up ego, the devotee revolves around the Lord and coming closer and closer with every round, merges like a moth, in His splendid refulgence. Since the path leading to the Supreme Being lies through the eyes, the prescribed mode of *arti* is that the devotee gazes into the eyes of the preceptor. But if he is not physically present, the devotee may perform this mode of spritual practice by concentrating his attention at the sixth ganglion. This new path is called by Nanak as *Ai Panth* or *Sahaj Yoga*.

XXX

What is Nanak's *Ai Panth* or *Sahaj Yoga* ? In section 28 of the Japji Nanak says: "He who vanquishes the mind in all its forms, conquers the world. This is my *Ai Panth*—the faith which comes from the original and the topmost region." *Ai Panth* is completely different from everything contained in Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity or Islam. It comprises of seven basic elements: fervent yearning to see the Supreme Being; search for a living preceptor and taking initiation from him; practice of three-fold meditation which includes recitation of Name as revealed by him, visualizing his form, and Word-Audition; to seek always his company (Congregation or *Satsang*) and to avoid the company of world-seekers; to live in society, earn livelihood by honest means, and lead a householder's life; abandoning reliance on past modes like scriptures, superstitions and rituals of every description; and to study the whole gamut of religion and putting them to trial. The real trial is whether by following a particular faith one develops detachment from this world and devotion for the Supreme Being, whether one can be an unbiased witness to the acts of one's own mind and senses, and whether the six evils, namely, desire, anger, greed, attachment, egoism and jealousy are being identified in one's own self and curbed.

Nanak exhorts not to accept religion as inheritance from one's forefathers, but to analyse carefully every extant faith and then pick and choose. No sensible person can persist with a physician whose medicines only aggravate the disease or with a laundry which makes

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clothes dirtier. He, therefore, invites to try his *Sahaj Yoga* which is the easiest way to the Supreme Being. The three-fold meditation-the key to his whole system—can be done by people of all ages, sexes or countries. To do it, one has only to sit at a quiet place, anywhere, in an easy posture, and it requires no physical or mental exertion. Recitation or contemplation on the preceptor's form or that of the first Brahamandic Region (the Region of the Thousand-Petalled Lotus) could be done even sitting in a chair or lying in bed. The practice of Word-Audition requires an easy sitting posture as revealed by the preceptor.

During the practice of Word-Audition if the body feels fatigued and drowsiness overtakes, the devotee should get up and stretch his limbs or walk a little and thereafter try again. Occasionally, a beginner may feel absent-minded during the practice. In that case, he could switch over to recitation or contemplation upon the form of the preceptor and resume the practice of Word-Audition after he has regained his composure.

Recitation and contemplation upon the form of the preceptor are especially efficacious in the removal of evil thoughts. Sometimes, however, the force of evil thoughts is so great that even recitation and contemplation are impossible to perform. During such times some hymns should be attentively read and their purport brought home to one's mind and applied to one's self.

If at any time, the mind totally refuses to apply itself to any of the above practices, the devotee should choose such verses in which a description of the path and the sub-divisions of the grand divisions is given, and sing them in low tones, concentrating on their meaning. Recitation of this kind gives somewhat the same benefit as the practice of the three-fold meditation.

The devotee should always have faith in the grace of the preceptor, but realize that it will work gradually, because sudden transformation will not produce lasting effect. The practitioner should weed out the desire to see extraordinary light or gain supernatural powers, because the aim is to reach the Region of Truth. That is possible according to Nanak, only through *Sahaj Yoga* and no other; even Brahm cannot be attained by older methods.

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XXXI

In Nanak, the availability of the living preceptor is held to be an indispensable condition for any meaningful spiritual progress, which means that unless the Supreme Being desires spiritual activities to be suspended (which He never does) the preceptor must be manifest at all times so that those who are entitled may have access to such activities. Before departing, the preceptor indicates a successor in whom he reincarnates. But if the Supreme Being so wills, he returns to his original abode. It is quite possible that the preceptor is manifest to only the qualified few and if there are none he may remain hidden. But, manifest or un-manifest, he is always there.

The period between his physical departure and re-manifestation in physical form may, for want of a better expression, be called as interregnum. But just as between the death of one monarch and the coronation of another, there is no time gap (because the successor is supposed to have started reigning with effect from the moment that the predecessor died), and law and order continues as usual, similarly, during the spiritual interregnum also the practice of *Sahaj Yoga* is not suspended. During the interregnum, the image of the last preceptor is contemplated, and the process is attended with spiritual concentration ; but there is a difference in degree of concentration produced by such contemplation and that produced by the contemplation of the form of a living preceptor. The difference may not be inaptly described as being somewhat similar to the difference between the feelings aroused by looking at the likeness of a friend or relative who has departed, and those generated by their thoughts when they are alive. In the former case, sorrow at the separation is the prevailing characteristic; in the latter case, living interest and mutual affection, felicity and help are the predominant features.

It follows from the above that there can be only one preceptor at a time; there cannot be several. There must be only one disciple-in-chief (*Gurumukh*) who will carry forward the preceptor's torch. And he, except rarely, cannot be the son or grandson of the preceptor. Indeed, in most cases, the members of the preceptor's family have been ordinary world-seekers like most of us. It was for this reason that Nanak disregarded the protests of his wife who pleaded for hereditary succession and preferred Lehna, who after assuming the mantle of guruship became known as Angad. How in the name of Nanak, even succession became hereditary, will be discussed in the next chapter.

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6

DISTORTIONS INTRODUCED IN NANAK'S TEACHINGS

Nanak never founded a formal religion. The word "Sikh" is a derivative from *Shishya* which means a disciple or student. The words *Seekhna* (to learn), *Sikhana* (to teach) are also derived from the same root. In Nanak's time, his disciples were not called "Sikhs"; there is no evidence to that effect. In any case, what presently passes as "Sikhism" has nothing to do with Nanak's teachings, inspite of the fact that an act of the Indian legislature defined a Sikh as one who "believes in the ten gurus and the Granth Sahib." Since Nanak was born in Talwandi, now part of Pakistani Punjab, Sikhism identified itself with the Punjab. Because the growth of Punjabi identity was closely related to the rise of the Sikh idea of life, the Sikh religion came to be called an ethnic religion, and the Sikhs as an ethnic minority in India. As in Judaism and much of Islam, in Sikhism also members of the community and of the religion go hand in hand. This is what makes their faith so important to Sikhs, who live outside the Punjab, for it provides them with a strong sense of identity. But all this is entirely different from the path shown by Nanak.

II

At the heart of Nanak's teachings lies the quest for truth (*sat*) of which he did not see any manifestation in any existing religion or scripture or ritual. He was not a social reformer. He never tried deliberately to establish a synthesis between Islam and Hinduism. He never said that all religions have the same objective and that God is the same irrespective of the names by which He may be remembered. He had no faith in any scripture, mosque, temple or gurudwara. He had just no interest in politics or in creating a separate state or community with its own language, rituals and symbols. He was not the sort of iconoclast who demolishes one set of idols and

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sets up others as substitutes. He was intrinsically opposed to performance of miracles or propagation of his faith or proselytism. His system is wholly repugnant to military organization of any sort. He never advocated acquisition of power. He never sought to perpetuate either in his own family or outside its bonds. He never said that service to humanity is the true worship of God and he never believed in what the present day Sikhs try to show as basic principles of Nanak—*sangat* (congregation or community), *pangat* (*langar* or community-kitchen), *sarovar* or temple, Guru Granth Sahib, *Khalsa*, *Sant Sipahi* (saint soldiers), the five Ks—*Kripan* (a sword hanging at the left side in a sling), *Kachha* (underwear), *Kara* (iron bangle), *Kesh* (uncut hair) and *Kangha* (comb). His one and only objective was to explain what the primary objective of man is. But before we take that up, it will be necessary to summarize the history of the distortions that his self-styled followers introduced in his glorious teachings in his name.

III

Nanak lived in 1469-1539 and was followed by Angad (1504-1552) who functioned as guru from 1539 to 1552. He is reputed to have evolved the Gurumukhi script and also built up a few gurudwaras from which his master's teachings could be propagated. Both activities ran counter to Nanak's fundamental tenets. He also organized games amongst his followers. Although these activities were not aimed at military training, they were nevertheless seen as preparation when the time for it came later. A little before his death, he is supposed to have appointed the 72 year old Baba Amar Da (1479-1574) his successor. Amar Das functioned as the third guru from 1552-1574. He set up the communal eating facilities served by a common kitchen and paid for by Sikhs associated with a particular temple. The aim perhaps was to encourage the Sikhs of all castes to eat together, without the caste prejudice which characterizes much of the ordinary way of our life even today. The community-kitchen which Amar Das made a precondition for congregation strengthened brotherhood and helped the underprivileged and to it the non-Sikhs were also welcome. But all this had really nothing to do with the basics of Nanak's system. Amar Das set up preaching centres and also constructed an open well with steps leading to the water level, and to it also were welcome Muslims, Hindus and un-

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touchables. But all this had really nothing to do with the basics of Nanak's system.

According to legend, some caste Hindus complained to Akbar, who was at Lahore, that Amar Das was desecrating their faith by permitting untouchables to dine with the twice-born. Amar Das deputed his son-in-law and chief disciple, Jetha, to answer the charge. The Mughal Emperor partook of the common-dinner and rejected the charges, even offering a permanent fief to Amar Das as aid to his congregation. Amar Das politely declined the offer. He, however, purchased a piece of land at the place where Amritsar was later founded, and prepared the designs for the *Amrit Sarovar* (pond of nectar) with a *Harimandir* (temple of God) in the centre of the pool.

In 1574, Amar Das died and Jetha, who became known as Ram Das (1534-1581), acted as the fourth guru from 1574-1581. The succession now became a family affair. The place where the pond was built was first christened Ramdaspur and later as Amritsar. Ram Das named his third son, Arjun Dev (1563-1606) to be the fifth guru. He functioned from 1581 to 1606 when he mas martyred. Arjun Dev, indeed, serves as a turning point in Sikh history, in that there was a maked increase in political strife between the Sikhs and Muslims. He built the renowned Harmandir, the Golden Temple at Amritsar, which became the nerve centre of Sikhism as a political as well as a religious force—a focal point of Sikh identity expressing many of the distortions which they had introduced in Nanak's teachings.

Arjun Dev founded a new town, Kartarpur, ten miles from Jullundar on the main road to Amritsar, as also the township of Taran Taaran, about fifteen miles to the south of Amritsar, with a huge pool and a gurudwara which was to serve as a centre for caring for the sick, the old and the orphaned. In doing all this, they were deviating from Nanak's basic doctrine of moving inward, rather than expending energy in external activities. In 1604, Arjun Dev compiled the Granth by collecting the writings of his predecessors and of some Hindu and Muslim saints whose teachings, in his view, agreed with those of Nanak and three other gurus, adding to them some hymns of his own. The Granth was scribed by Bhai Gur Das and "enthroned" in Harmandir Sahib (The Golden Temple) and

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became known as Pothi or Granth Sahib (Mr Book). When the tenth guru, Govind Singh invested the guruship in the *Gurbani* (Guru's words), the Pothi Sahib became known as Adi Guru Granth Sahib. The term *adi* means first so that Arjun Dev's Granth Sahib began to be termed as Adi Guru Granth Sahib to distinguish it from another Granth called Dasam (tenth) Granth Sahib composed/compiled by the tenth guru.

The Dasam Granth Sahib is not treated as guru. It is not one book and the whole of it is not a religious scripture. It is a compilation of philosophical, historical and other secular writings of Govind Singh compiled in one volume by his disciples like Man Singh and Baba Binod Singh. It seeks to explain the historical and mythological references found in the Adi Granth, and contains Puranic myths relating to Rama and Krishna and battles among the devils and gods. The Adi Guru Granth Sahib has some 6000 hymns, the major portions being from Nanak and Arjun Dev himself. The Gurbani is divided into 31 *ragas*, each *raga* being sub-divided into *chowpadey*, the *ashtpadi* and the *chhand*. There are three sets of compositions—*Japu* (for morning), *Sodar* (for evening) and *Sohila* (bed time). In the beginning of the *Japu* there is the *Mool Mantra* which is also repeated at the beginning of each *raga* and is repeated within the *raga* whenever there is a change in the musical code. The Gurbani is followed by Bhagat (Devotee) Bani. Hymns of Kabir (who, in our view, was Nanak's own teacher), Baba Farid, Nam Dev, Ravi Das, Dhanna, Jaidev, Trilochan, Ramanand, Pipa, Sain, and Surdas. Even the hymns of Sundar, a relative of Amar Das, are included in the Gurbani.

Two other parts of the Gurbani are the *Var*, an account of the lives of the first five gurus, written by two singers, Satta and Balwand, and the Bhatt Bani, written by a set of Bhatts or professional singers of hymns of praise. They are reported to have visited Goindwal when Arjun Dev was there and were impressed by him. At the end of the Adi Granth, there are two concluding *shabdas* by Arjun Dev, the first of which explains that the compilation contains the praise of the Lord, and the second thanks Him for having got the compilation done through the medium of Arjun Dev. To establish a separate ethnic identity of the Sikhs (something which Nanak would never admit), the Adi Granth Sahib is written in the Gurumukhi script.

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IV

The construction of the Golden Temple at Amritsar annoyed Emperor Jehangir who is reputed to have decided on the liquidation of "this shop of falsehood" and its perpetrator, Arjun Dev. The Emperor was actively assisted by Arjun's elder brother, Pirthi Chand, who was also an aspirant to guruship. The practice of perpetrating guruship within the family now began to show its ugly face. The governor of Lahore encouraged armed attacks on Amritsar to kill Arjun Dev and instal Pirthi Chand in his place as the guru. Both attempts failed. Arjun Dev, however, began to groom his son Har Gobind for the guruship and started his military training. The sea-change in Nanak's teaching now began in right earnest. Arjun Dev's activities roused the fears of an already apprehensive Emperor who accused him of helping political opponents and of organizing a sort of state within a state, establishing for himself a regular source of income by appointed officers called *masands* collecting tithes and offerings from the Sikhs wherever they might be. Arjun Dev went to the extent of blessing Khusroe, the rebellious son of Jehangir.

Arjun Dev was, accordingly, summoned to Delhi, tortured by burning hot sand being poured on his body, and drowned in the river Ravi on 30 May, 1606. Opinion is divided as to the justice of what happened, but the Sikhs see the death as a martyrdom. Under his leadership, the Sikh's had begun to stand against Muslim aggression. This made the guru a rallying point for others in the Punjab, and soon many members of the Jat farming caste had aligned themselves with him. A switch of emphasis from a peaceful spreading of the faith to an assertion of the right to defend that faith took place among the Sikhs, now grown greater in numbers and strength.

Har Gobind (1595-1644) acted as the sixth guru, from 1606 to 1644. In 1607, he put on two swords -- the sword of guruship and that of political leadership. This single act completely changed the essence of Nanak's doctrine which had absolutely nothing to do with politics, despite the fact that Nanak had come into clash with the first Mughal Emperor, Babar. In 1609, Har Gobind laid the foundation of the Akal Takht in front of the Harmandir, as a seat to oversee his group's political welfare. He invited young men to come to Amritsar with horses and arms to be trained to protect their faith in times of emer-

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gency. Jehangir retaliated by arresting Har Gobind and took him to the Gwalior Fort. Later he relented and even placated Har Gobind, by releasing the fifty two kings of the Himachal region which led people to call Har Gobind as *Bandi Chora* (the emancipator of prisoners). Thereafter, every time the Mughal army attacked the Sikhs—at Amritsar, Guru Sar (Bhatinda) and Kartarpur (Jullandar) – it was repulsed. Har Gobind had clashed with Shah Jehan by encroaching on the royal game preserves and when the Mughal armies were defeated by Har Gobind's men, Shah Jehan ordered his house and property to be seized. To escape further attack Har Gobind set up a gurudwara at Kiratpur in the foothills of Himalayas and before his demise in 1644, nominated his grandson Har Rai (1630—1661) as his successor.

Har Rai functioned as the seventh guru, from 1644-1661, in the hilly region of east Punjab. He maintained a military posture, although, tactfully avoided any armed clash with the Mughal armies. There was no trouble as long as Shah Jehan ruled, but with the advent of Aurangzeb on the throne in 1658, the situation materially changed. If the followers of Nanak had adhered to his basic tenets, there would not have been much trouble but now that they had, more or less, ceased to be a religion and become a political community with the cover of religion, the fanatical Mughal Emperor swooped down upon them. Aurangzeb began by inviting Har Rai to Delhi for discussion. Har Rai saw in it an attempt on the part of the Emperor to humiliate him and instead of going himself he sent his eldest son Ram Rai with some of his disciples. Ram Rai and Aurangzeb developed a cordial touch, to the horror of the mullahs. To force Ram Rai to make a statement against Islam, they asked him to explain a couplet in the *Adi Granth* which referred to the futility of the Mussalman's practice of burying a dead body, instead of burning it. Rai said : "The word is not Mussalman, but *Be-Iman* (dishonest man)." This explanation satisfied the mullahs as also the Emperor. But Har Rai thought that his son Ram Rai had betrayed the Sikh religious principles for the sake of having Mughal patronage and the gift of a fief at Dehradun in Uttar Pradesh (the fief is still with the present generation of Ram Rai, who is held as a guru. His successors are also running a post-graduate college at Dehradun, now affiliated to Garhwal University). Har Rai disentitled Ram Rai from guruship, ex-communicated him

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from the fold and forbade his disciples to have any dealings with him. The guruship was now assigned by Har Rai to his five year old son Hari Kishan (1656-1664) who acted as the eighth guru from 1661 to 1664. They were now paying the full wages of restricting the guruship within the narrow confines of the guru's family.

V

Meanwhile, Aurangzeb's attention focussed on the child guru who was called to Delhi by a subtle move. The Emperor's faithful minister, Raja Jai Singh, pretending to be guru's devoted disciple invited him to his residence (where now stands the gurudwara Bangla Sahib) and treated him with great honour. Aurangzeb asked to be received by the guru at Raja Jai Singh's house. The Sikhs, however, feared some ploy and refused the imperial request. Aurangzeb felt insulted and put Hari Kishan under house arrest. But the child had already caught infection of small-pox then raging in Delhi and began to sink. Before he died, he is supposed to have nominated Baba Bakale as his successor. Baba Bakale was Har Gobind's (Hari Kishan's grand-father) brother living in the village of Bakala and his real name was Tegh Bahadur (1621-1675). His inauguration as the ninth guru was delayed because in the ring for guruship there was not only Ram Rai, but also many *babas* from Bakale. Eventually, the congregation of Delhi, under the leadership of Makhan Shah Lobana, formally declared Tegh Bahadur as the ninth guru who acted from 1664 to 1675.

Like Har Rai, Tegh Bahadur was more of a devotional man than a soldier. It was only when the Mughal bigot began to destroy temples and oppress Sikh groups in the Punjab that he was summoned from Bengal (where he had been living with his family) to rally the Sikhs against the enemy. He purchased the village Makhowal from a hill raja of Bilaspur and built up another Sikh centre there which he made his headquarter. The place was first called *Chak Nanaki* and later named as Anandpur Sahib. His only son, Gobind Rai, (who later became famous as Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth guru) was born at Patna, in 1666, when Tegh Bahadur, along with his family was touring east. Leaving the mother and the child at Patna, he visited Assam and with his good offices settled the dispute between the local tribal raja and Mughal authorities. In recognition of this

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service, they raised a big mound (*dhobari*) there and built up the gurudwara Dhobari Sáhib.

On returning to the Punjab, Tegh Bahadur received a delegation of Kashmiri Brahmins who were being persecuted by the Muslim fanatics and who sought his protection. Tegh Bahadur is reported to have told the Kashmiri Brahmins sportingly that they could inform the Emperor that instead of coercing so many Hindus, he could convert the Sikh guru to Islam and then all his followers would automatically be converted. Tegh Bahadur also toured the countryside where the Mughal hordes were terrorizing the non-muslims in Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan. Tegh Bahadur gave them the slogan :

Fear none, frighten none,
Love the Lord, the Mighty one !

Meanwhile, Aurangzeb had been annoyed by Tegh Bahadur' insolent reply to the Kashmiri Brahmins' deputation and ordered hi arrest. Tegh Bahadur and his associates were tortured when they refused to embrace Islam. Mati Das was split into two by a saw and Dayala was boiled to death in water. Tegh Bahadur was decapitated in public. The gurudwara Sisganj now stands by the side of the police station where Tegh Bahadur was imprisoned and executed on 11 November, 1675. His head was taken to Anandpur Sahib by Jaita. A trader, Lakhi Shah, took the headless body to his camp and cremated it by setting fire to his hut to conceal what he was doing from the imperial forces. About hundred years later, gurudwara Raquab Ganj was built there by Sardar Baghat Singh.

Tegh Bahadur's only son Gobind Rai was born in Patna in 1666. In 1675, at the age of 9, he inherited the guruship from his father and functioned as the tenth or the last guru up to 1708. His associates began to prepare militarily for the battle against the Mughals and they invited their followers to Anandpur Sahib with arms and horses and gave them military training. This alarmed some Hindu rajas in the nearby hills of Himachal but Gobind Rai calmed their fears by his peaceful gestures. He built up the new township with a guradwara at Paonta Sahib (midway between Dehradun in UP and Yamunanagar in Haryana) on the bank of the river Yamuna. Some Hindu rajas and Gobind Rai's forces, however,

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had a fight at Bhangani a few miles upstream from Paonta. Thereafter, Gobind Rai and his friends returned to Anandpur Sahib to prepare themselves militarily. The Hindu rajas were now harassed by the Mughal authorities, who wanted heavy taxes from them. Gobind Rai's men helped them fight the Mughals. Aurangzeb, however, won over these rajas to his side.

VI

On Baisakhi day (13th April) 1699, Gobind Rai took the final steps to depart completely from Nanak's teachings, and to militarize his followers. That day, he assembled them at Anandpur Sahib, founded by his father, in the foothills of the Himalayas. In front of the gathering, he raised his naked, glittering sword five times, one after the other, and asked for the head of a Sikh each time. The first to come was Daya Ram, a Khatri of Lahore. Gobind Rai took him to the nearby tent and came again to the stage with the bloody sword in his hands to ask for another head of a Sikh. This brought Dharam Chand, a Delhi Jat, followed by Himmat Das, a washerman of Dwarka (Gujarat), Mokham Chand, a calico printer of Puri (Orissa) and Bhai Chand, a barber of Bidar (Karnataka). The audience had thought that each one of them had been sacrificed by Gobind Singh but they were stunned when he brought out all the five men to the stage, dressed in special clothing. To add to the dramatic effect, he prepared *amrit* (nectar) from water which he made "holy" by reciting Japu, Jaap, Swayas Chopais and Ananda—the five compositions from Gurbani and by stirring the water with a double-edged sword and sweetening it with sugar balls (*batashas*). These five Amritdhari Sikhs he called as *Panj Piaras* (Five Beloved Ones) and they were given the surname *Singh* (lion) and they were told that henceforward there were no Jats or Khatris or high or low caste persons in the Sikh fraternity which he named as Khalsa (from *khalis*=pure). They drank *amrita* out of the same bowl, though they all came from different castes. All the Sikhs were henceforth to be surnamed "Singh" and all of them swore to keep the five Ks. After initiating the five, Gobind Rai was, in his turn, initiated by them and renamed "Gobind Singh". At the end of the initiation, the guru hailed his new converts with the legend *Wah Guru Ji Ka Khalsa, Wah Guru Ji Ki Fateh*—the Khalsa are the chosen of God, Victory be to God. In the next few years, he recruited nearly a lakh of persons into his Khalsa fraternity. Many Sikhs, however, called themselves as 'Sahaj Dharis' (those who follow the easier

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path) and preferred to remain clean shaven. The division between the Khalsa and the Sahaj Dharis continues to this day. The Khalsa was made to believe that they were a chosen people. Sikhism now became "Singhism"—a counterblast to Aurangzeb's Islam—and under Gobind Singh's command the Khalsa pursued the policy of fighting fanaticism with fanaticism.

In 1704, Anandpur Sahib was surrounded by the joint forces of the Mughal Emperor, the Hindu rajas and the subedars of Lahore and Sirhind. The seige lasted several months. The two sides agreed that Gobind Singh would leave Anandpur Sahib and preach his faith elsewhere and that he could return to it, later. As soon as the Sikhs came out, the Mughal army attacked them but Gobind Singh escaped by crossing the Sirsa river and reached Chamkor Saheb (Ropar in Punjab) with forty associates where he got built a mud structure called Garhi. The Mughals, however, were in pursuit and killed 32 of them including the two elder sons of Gobind Singh—Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh. In 1705, Gobind Singh left the Garhi along with Man Singh, Dharam Singh and Daya Singh. To confuse the Mughals, he put his ceremonial plume (*Kalghi*)) on the head of one, Sangat Singh, one of the Sikhs left behind at Garhi. Sangat Singh and his few associates were killed and the Mughals mistook him for Gobind Singh. Meanwhile, the two younger sons of Gobind Singh, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, had separated from their father when he was crossing the river Sirsa. They along with Gobind Singh's mother were caught by the Mughals, brought to Sirhind and were bricked alive in a wall, when they refused to embrace Islam. This was done by the nawab of Sirhind in the teeth of opposition by the nawab of Malerkotla who protested the killing of innocent children. About five years later, Banda Singh Bahadur killed the nawab of Sirhind and avenged the killing of Gobind Singh's minor sons.

When the Mughals discovered that Gobind Singh had fled, they searched for him. He was, however, constantly on the move and went up to Alamgir (Ludhiana) and later to Dina Kangar (Faridkot). There he composed his Zafar Nama (Letter of Victory) to Aurangzeb in which he warned the Mughal : "The Guru Khalsa is alive and will remain so for ever. The Khalsa will end your repression very soon." Eventually, the Mughal forces got him at Mukatsar or Khudrana but

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they were defeated by the Sikh forces. Gobind Singh now settled at Talwandi—Sabo (Damdama Sahib in district Bhatinda which became as famous as Anandpur Sahib). Here he composed the Dasam Granth and set up a school of Sikh studies and produced the final edition of the Adi Granth by adding to it the hymns of Tegh Bahadur.

Since he had lost all the sons in his his lifetime, and could not pass on the guruship to anyone else outside the narrow confines of his own family, Gobind Singh ended the succession of gurus, investing the Adi Granth of which he himself produced the final edition, as the immortal guru of the Sikhs. Gobind Singh turned the Sikhs into a military theocracy. "I shall always be present wherever five Singhs are present," he had declared.[1] His own hymns, compiled separately in the Dasam Granth, are not given the sanctity accorded to the Adi Granth Sahib. In 1707, Aurangzeb died, a broken man, and his sons began to fight for succession. Gobind Singh at once returned to North India to exploit the situation. He joined Bahadur Shah in the war of succession and proceeded with him to Deccan. While in camp at Nanded (Nadir, then Hyderabad state) he was stabbed to death by an Afghan on 7th October, 1708. He was cremated at Nanded where they built up the gurudwara Abachal Nagar (Huzur Sahib).[2]

Before his death, Gobind Singh had become disillusioned with Aurangzeb's son Bahadur Singh who had given him a big reception at Agra in 1707 for his support to him in the war of succession. While going to the Deccan, Bahadur Shah had developed second thoughts about his promises to punish those who had terrorized Gobind Singh's followers and had killed his two minor sons. While Bahadur Shah continued his journey towards the Deccan, Gobind Singh remained at Nanded. But before he was stabbed, he had charged a new convert Lachhman Das (1630–1716) to avenge the tyranny perpetrated by the Mughals on the Sikhs.

It was this Lachhman Das who took the name of Banda Singh Bahadur at his initiative. Along with five other Singhs, including Baj Singh, he roused the non-Muslim peasantry and in a series of whirlwind campaigns destroyed the Muslim landed-class in Southern Punjab. After eight years of defiance, Banda was starved to surrender, and along with 700 of his followers he was executed in Delhi on 19th June, 1716.[3]

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VII

Following Banda's execution, the Singhs were savagely persecuted by the Muslim rulers in the Punjab, although the situation somewhat eased with the invasion of the Persians under Nadir Shah in 1738-39, and those of the Afghans under Ahmad Shah Durrani who decisively defeated the Marathas at Panipat in 1761. The Sikhs who had kept out of the way of the invader, filled the vacuum Banda left under remarkable leaders, chiefly Kapur Singh and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. Keeping in mind the stiff resistance offered by the Sikhs to the Mughals, the rulers decided to offer a nawabship and a fief to the Khalsa in 1733 with the proviso that they accepted the authority of the Lahore rulers. Kapur Singh accepted but because he did not fully observe the agreement, the fief was confiscated in 1735. They also prevented the Singhs from visiting Harmandir Sahib in Amritsar. The Singhs how introduced a piece in their daily prayer which asked the Lord "*Amritsar de darshan ashnan*" and continued their guerilla tactics, robbing the Muslim armies whenever they could. In 1740, the pond in the Golden Temple was filled with debris and a local chief, Massa Rangarh, was put in charge of it. He used to sit and smoke, watching dancing girls in Harmandir Sahib. Two Bikaneri Singhs—Sukha Singh and Mehtab Singh—decapitated Massa, picked his head up, and rode off on their horses fighting the watchmen outside the temple. That is what they had made out of Nanak's teachings !

The Mughals, in turn, ordered a general massacre of the Sikhs along the Beas river in the Kahnuwar area of the Gurdaspur district, and killed 10,000 of them in what came to be called *Chhota Ghalughara* (small holocaust) ! So far the Sikhs had been loosely organized into more than 60 jathas, acting independently of each other. In March 1748, at the Akal Takht in Amritsar, Kapur Singh organized the Dal Khalsa and divided the Sikh forces into 12 militias (*Misls*), with separate spheres of operation, under the overall command of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. They also declared that the Punjab belonged to the Sikhs and that they would defend it with might. Religion of Nanak, therefore, ceased to be their concern. The militias strength varied from 20,000 horsemen of the most powerful, the Bhangis of Gujarat, to a few hundred of the smaller ones. The militias built chains of forts and levied protection money from towns and villages. In 1748, Mir Mannu had become the Governor of Punjab, who after

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1751 allied himself with Ahmad Shah Abdali (Afghan King) against the Mughal Emperor. On his advice, Mir Mannu tortured the Sikhs and killed many hundreds of them in Lahore where Shahidganj Gurudwara stands in their memory. The Sikh children, when cut into pieces by their Muslim tormentors chanted : "We are the plants and Mannu is the hoe ; the more he cuts us, the more we grow !"

In 1756, the fourth invasion of Abdali took place, and while his troops were returning from Delhi, Mathura and Agra through the Punjab, the Sikhs attacked them. Abdali, in retaliation, asked his son Temur, the subedar of Lahore, to destroy the Golden Temple and fill the pond with debris. The Sikhs fought under Baba Deep Singh (from Damdama Sahib, Bhatinda) who was killed. In 1759, Abdali's fifth invasion was beaten back by the Sikhs near Lahore. In 1761, Jassa Singh Ahluwala occupied Lahore for a short while and struck coins in the name of Misl Confederacy and assumed the title of Sultan-ul-Qaum (King of the Sikh Nation).

In February 1762, occurred the *Vada Ghalughara* (the great holocaust) when Abdali came for his sixth invasion. About 30,000 Sikh men, women and children were killed near Ludhiana and another 20,000 escaped to the south, towards Barnala town. In April 1762, he blew up the Golden Temple and filled the pond with dead cows and refuse. By May 1762, however, the Sikhs took over Sirhind and in October 1762, pushed Abdali out of Amritsar. In December 1764, Abdali came down for the seventh time and fought a battle with a token Sikh force. But on 17 April, 1765, the Bhangis took Lahore. The power of the Misls now extended from the Indus in the West to the Ganges in the east, and from the Himalayas in the north to the desert wastes of Sindh in the south. On April 27, 1765 the Khalsa decided to reconstruct the Golden Temple and protect it from future desecration. The structure rebuilt in 1765 was plated in gold. In 1783. the Sikhs led by Baba Baghel Singh, attacked Delhi ruled by Shah Alam II whose wife became a ceremonial sister to the Sikhs. Shah Alam gave the Sikhs plenty of money with which they maintained the Khalsa army and built up gurudwaras like Sisganj, Bangla Sahib and several others. The place where Baghel camped with his 30,000 men is now called *Tees Hazari*, and *Pul Mithai* (Bridge of Sweets) is where sweets were distributed after the seige of Delhi by the Sikhs.

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The Misls, however, did not retain their cooperative character for long. As soon as they dispossessed the Mughals, they began to fight among themselves, until Raja Ranjit Singh of Sukarchakia Misl (1780–1839) defeated the others, and created a unified Sikh state. Ranjit was born on November 2 (there is confusion about the date. Some say it is November 13), 1780 at Badrukhan or Gujranwala, and succeeded his father Sardar Maha Singh in 1792 as the head of Sukarchakia Misl of the Sikh confederacy. He rose to primacy through his own genius and was perhaps the ablest of the Indians of the 18th century. With the help of his mother-in-law, Sada Kaur, widow of the head of the Kanahya Misl, he captured Lahore in June 1799 and proclaimed himself the Maharaja of Punjab. In 1801, he defeated the Bhangis and in 1802, captured Amritsar, one of the two Sikh capitals. On 1 January, 1805, he agreed to exclude Holkar from his territory and captured Ludhiana. This brought him in conflict with the British who claimed the land upto Sutlej. With the intervention of Charles Metcalfe in 1808, the issue was settled on 25 April, 1809 by the Treaty of Amritsar. Ranjit now decided to avoid further trouble with the British and to expand to the north and the west. He accepted Sutlej river as his eastern boundary. From this time dates the formation of the famous Western trained Sikh army with its formidable artillery and numerous expatriate European officers. In 1818, he captured Multan and in 1819, took over Kashmir. By 1820, he had consolidated his power in the whole of Punjab between the Sutlej and the Indus. In 1822, he began to modernize his army by employing officers of Napoleon's disbanded army to train his troops. In 1823, he defeated the Afghans, captured Peshawar and Ladakh in 1834 and repulsed an Afghan counter-attack on Peshawar in 1837. In 1838, he signed a tripartite treaty with the British and the exiled Afghan Shah Shuja. In a joint invasion of Afghanistan he freely employed Hindus and Muslims as well as Europeans, but always on the basis of Sikh supremacy. Morally, he was not straight. He died at Lahore on June 27, 1839 and in about six years his empire collapsed due to the internecine strife of rival chiefs. The Khalsa had been rendered ineffective by Ranjit's policy of ignoring the Akal Takht which had no say whatever in political affairs. In the Sikh wars of 1845-46 and 1848-49 the Sikhs lost, and the Punjab was annexed to British India. Maharaja Dulip Singh, Ranjit's youngest son, was granted a pension and left India for England where he died on October 22, 1893.

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VIII

The role of Sikhs during India's first war of independence (Mutiny of 1857) was anti-national and pro British, so that after 1857 the proportion of Sikhs in the British army in India was increased. New regulations permitting Sikh soldiers to observe the five Ks helped in retaining their separate identity. Soon after the annexation of the Punjab by the British in 1849, one Ram Singh, started the Kam. Dhari movement (the Kukas), seeking to re-establish the Spartan traditions of the early Khalsa and restore the Sikh rule. In 1871, they protested against the slaughter of cows by killing a couple of butchers clashing with the police. As many as 66 Ramdharis were arrested and blown off from cannons at Malar Kotla in 1872. The other Sikhs refused to help Ram Singh who was exiled by the British to Rangoon where he died a tragic death in 1885. His followers raised him to guruship by claiming that Guru Gobind Singh himself had passed on the guruship to one Baba Balak Singh (11th Guru) who in turned appointed Ram Singh as the 12th Guru. The other Sikhs refused to accept these claims.

At Beas, Jaimal Singh, a Sikh follower of Radha Soami Satsang, Soami Bagh, Agra, set up his own guruship and transferred the property of the gurudwara complex to his personal ownership, thus preventing the Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, Amritsar from taking over its administration. He removed the Granth Sahib which had been kept there since the beginning, to prove that his teachings are independent of Nanak's faith, although following Nanak they believe in five sounds, denying the primacy of Radha Soami name. Since 1891, the Dera Baba Jaimal Singh has been a thorn in the Sikh flesh.

Then, there are the Nirankaris who aimed at reforming religious rituals. During the reign of Ranjit Singh, one Baba Dayal Das, used to repeat *Dhan Nirankar* (glory be to the formless) so that his followers called themselves Nirankaris. He died in 1943 and his associates moved from Lahore to Delhi after partition. He composed the Avtar Bani in which he denounced certain Sikh practices including the worship of Adi Granth. Avtar Singh was followed by his son Gurbachan Singh who fought with the Sikhs in 1978 when thirteen Sikhs and a few Nirankaris were killed.

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At the turn of the century, the Sikhs launched the Singh-Sabha movement under the patronage of the British rulers who helped them set up Sikh schools and colleges in different parts of the Punjab. In. 1909, a sympathetic English writer, MA Macauliffe, produced a six-volume study of Sikh religion. During the First World War (1914-1918) the Sikhs closely collaborated with the British rulers and fought gallantly in France, Africa and the Middle East. Meanwhile, the Sikh settlers in British Columbia and California who were subjected to discrimination practised by the White against all Asiatics founded the Ghadar Party (Revolutionary Organization). They had established gurudwaras in Stockton, Vancouver and other places. In 1912, a formal flag hoisting ceremony was to be performed at Stockton Gurudwara and the Americans objected to the raising of the Sikh flag on American land. Many of the Sikhs returned to India and for several months in 1915 they carried on terrorist activities in central Punjab. The Ghadrites were crushed. In 1919, the Sikhs clashed with the British rulers on the issue of the control of the gurudwaras. The government supported the hereditary *mahants* (priests) who were in posses ion, while a group of radicals formed the Akali Dal (the Immortals) to take over the gurudwaras.

The Akali movement of 1922-25 saw 30,000 Sikhs in jail. In 1925, the Sikh Gurudwaras Act was passed, handing over all historic shrines to a 160-man elected body known as the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC). During the Second World War, the Anglo-Sikh collaboration continued. Some of the Sikhs, however, joined the Indian National Congress and a sizeable section of Subhash Bose's Indian National Army was drawn from the Sikhs.

IX

In 1947–89 the Sikhs waged a struggle, first for a Punjabi Suba on linguistic lines which after 1978 was turned by the extremists into a demand foı a full-fledged independent state called as Khalistan. The States Reorganization Commission (SRC), 1955 examined all the four arguments in favour of the Punjabi-speaking State, viz. :

(1) It will remove all causes of unrest and discontent, eliminate language controversies, enable the imparting of education

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in the mother tongue and help the people to grow and advance ;

(2) It will be a geographically compact unit, financially viable, surplus in food and rich in resources ;

(3) It will be a homogeneous State inhabited by sturdy people, and as such would strengthen the defence of the north-western border ;

(4) It will secure for the country a contented Sikh community.[4]

The SRC rejected the demand for the reasons stated below :

(1) The creation of a Punjabi-speaking State would offer no solution to the language problem, the present arrangements for the recognition of both Punjabi and Hindi could not be done away with and the controversies would not, in all probability, come to an end, and while no major problem would be solved, both the languages might suffer.

(2) There are no complaints from those sponsoring the movement for a Punjabi-speaking State about economic or political exploitation of the Punjabi-speaking areas by the representatives of the so-called Hindi-speaking region. If anything, the complaint is from the hilly areas and the Haryana tract.

(3) There is undoubtedly internal tension in this area. But this tension follows communal and not territorial lines. There is a little likelihood that the creation of the proposed State will lead to greater communal harmony and concord.

(4) The sponsors of the Punjabi-speaking State argue that a majority of the people inhabiting the area are in favour of a Punjabi-speaking State and that opposition is confined to certain communal elements. The results of the recent elections to the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee have been cited as evidence of the popular backing

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which the demand has amongst the Sikh masses. On the other hand, the results of the last general elections and subsequent by-elections are cited in support of the view that the demand for the Punjabi-speaking State is confined to communal elements in the Sikh community.

(5) It is quite obvious that the minimum measure of agreement necessary for making a change in the present set-up does not exist so far as the proposal for the Punjabi-speaking State is concerned. The Dar Commission rightly expressed the view that no linguistic State should be imposed on substantial minorities opposing them. In this particular case, we may actually be imposing the wishes of a substantial minority on the majority.

(6) The case for a Punjabi-speaking State falls firstly, because it lacks the general support of the people inhabiting the area, and secondly, because it will not eliminate any of the causes of friction from which the demand for a separate Punjabi-speaking State emanates. The proposed State will solve neither the language problem nor the communal problem and, far from removing internal tension, which exists between communal and not linguistic and regional groups, it might further exacerbate the existing feelings.[5]

In March 1966, however, the Congress Party agreed to create in Punjab a separate Punjabi-speaking State in which the Sikhs would constitute about 55% of the population, and a separate Haryana State with Hindi-speaking people in majority. But this did not resolve the Sikh problem. In October 1978, they passed the Anandpur Sahib Resolution. These are twelve in number and they are reproduced below :—

(1) "The Shiromani Akali Dal realizes that India is a federal and republican geographical entity of different languages, religions and cultures. To safeguard the fundamental rights of the religious and linguistic minorities, to fulfil the demands of the democratic traditions and to pave the way for economic progress, it has become imperative that the Indian constitutional infrastructure should be given a real federal shape by redefining the Central and State relations

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and rights on the lines of the aforesaid principles and objectives..."

(2) "The momentous meeting of the Shiromani Akali Dal calls upon the Government of India to examine carefully the long tale of the excesses, wrongs, illegal actions committed by the previous Congress Governments, more particularly during the Emergency, and try to find an early solution to the following problems :

(a) Chandigarh originally raised as a capital for Punjab should be handed over to Punjab.

(b) The long standing demand of the Shiromani Akali Dal for the merger in Punjab of the Punjabi-speaking areas, to be identified by linguistic experts with the village as a unit, should be conceded.

(c) The control of Head Works should continue to be vested in Punjab and, if need be, the Reorganization Act should be amended.

(d) The arbitrary and unjust Award given by Mrs Indira Gandhi during the Emergency on the distribution of Ravi-Beas waters should be revised on the universally accepted norms and principles, thereby justice be done to Punjab.

(e) Keeping in view the special aptitude and martial qualities of the Sikhs, the present ratio of their strength in the Army should be maintained.

(f) The excesses being committed on the settlers in the Terai region of UP in the name of Land Reforms should be vacated by making suitable amendments in the Ceiling Law on the Central guidelines.

(3) "The chief source of inspiration of the economic policies and programme of the Shiromani Akali Dal are the secular, democratic and socialistic concepts of Sri Guru Nanak Dev and Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Our economic programme is based on three basic principles :

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(a) Dignity of Labour.

(b) An economic and social structure which provides for the uplift of the poor and depressed sections of society.

(c) Unabated opposition to concentration of economic and political power in the hands of the capitalists."

(4) The resolution complains of discrimination against the Punjabi language in the adjoining States of Himachal, Haryana, Delhi, and Jammu and Kashmir.

(5) The resolution asks the State of Jammu and Kashmir to rehabilitate the refugees from West Pakistan who migrated to that State at the time of partition of the country.

(6) Through this resolution the Akali Dal Conference takes strong exception to the discrimination to which the minorities (not only the Sikhs), in other States are subjected. The complaint is that their interests are ignored. The resolution demands redress of injustices against the Sikhs in those States and asks for appropriate representation for them in the services of the government, of local bodies and in State Legislatures through nomination, consistent with the declared policy of the Central Government.

(7) After noting with satisfaction the increase in farm yields, as a result of which "the country is heading towards self-sufficiency," the resolution regrets that poor farmers are unable to take to mechanization because of the enormous costs involved. The resolution asks the Government of India to abolish the excise duty on tractors so that ordinary farmers may also be able to avail of farm machinery and contribute to the growth of the gross agricultural produce of the country.

(8) The resolution appeals to the Central and State Governments "to pay particular attention to the poor and labouring classes" to make suitable amendments in the Minimum Wages Act and take other legal steps "to improve the economic lot of the labouring classes to enable them to

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lead a respectable life and play a useful role in the rapid industrialisation of the country."

(9) In the resolution the Akali Dal seeks permission from the Government of India to instal a broadcasting station at the Golden Temple "for the relay of *Gurbani Kirtan* for the spiritual satisfaction of those Sikhs who are living in foreign lands."

(10) The resolution asks the government to make necessary amendments in the relevant clause of the Hindu Succession Act to give a woman rights of inheritance in the property of her father-in-law instead of her father, and to exempt agricultural lands from wealth tax and estate duty.

(11) This resolution impresses upon the Government of India, the desirability of providing for the welfare of the economically backward scheduled and non-scheduled castes, and for setting up a special ministry at the centre as a practical measure to render justice to them on the basis of reservation.

(12) The last resolution asks the Congress Government in the Punjab to "vacate the gross injustice" done to the State (not to the Sikhs alone) in the distribution of the Ravi-Beas waters.[6]

Since these resolutions, in their entirety, were not acceptable to the government, in 1982–84 the Golden Temple was converted by the Sikh extremists as their arsenal from which to launch terrorist attacks on peaceful citizens. That led to operation Bluestar in June 1984, which in turn, led to Mrs Gandhi's assassination on 31 October, 1984, followed by November 1984 Sikh massacres in Delhi, Kanpur and few other places. Rajiv Gandhi and Sant Longowal signed an accord on the Punjab on 24 July, 1985. It was denounced by four sets of peoples. First, the people of Chandigarh. They have acquired a vested interest in the comforts and privileges they have enjoyed as a Union territory and the Centre's protege in a State at odds with New Delhi. They are loath to give up this status, although if the choice were between merger with the Punjab or Haryana, they would probably choose the Punjab.

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Second, the opposition parties in Rajasthan and Haryana, which described the accord as a sell-out to the Akalis. Third, some elements within the Congress, who would have liked to have some stones in reserve to throw them at Rajiv Gandhi—the stone in this case would be that he has accepted Akali conditions in full which his mother had resisted as anti-national. Fourth, and the most dangerous, are the Sikh extremists and their sympathizers who denounced the accord as a sell-out to the government because it did not fulfil all the demands they had been making on behalf of the imprisoned agitators, and did not accept their own versions of the Anandpur Sahib resolution. These people would now receive encouragement from the unhappiness Tohra and Badal have expressed with the accord. To this list, could be added those Hindus of Punjab who might be feeling exasperated by the question as to why the terms now accepted as harmless were rejected earlier. On these terms a settlement with the Akali Dal was available as long ago as the middle of 1982 and upto as recently as early 1984, and if it had been secured at that time, Punjab and India could have been spared much of the agony and turmoil they have gone through.[7]

The Sikh terrorists made short work of Sant Harchand Singh Longowal on August 20, 1985 by killing him in cold blood. On his part, Rajiv Gandhi got paralysed by the fears of the Hindu majority so that the accord remained a dead letter from 1985 to 1989, with the Sikh terrorists making dastardly attacks on all those who refuse to toe their line.

X

Now, what is the basic nature of the Khalsa created by Gobind Singh ? He sought to mix up some principles of Nanak with his own political inclinations and values which unfortunately ran counter to everything that Nanak stood for. Addressing the congregation after the baptism of the *Panj Piaras* in 1699, he said :

> I wish you all to embrace one creed and follow one path, obliterating all differences of religion. Let the four Hindu castes, who have different rules laid down for them in the scriptures, abandon them altogether and adopting the way of cooperation mix freely with one another. Let no one deem himself superior to another. Do not follow the old scriptures. Let none pay heed to the Ganges and other places of pilgrimage which are

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considered holy in the Hindu religion or adore the Hindu deities such as Rama, Krishna, Brahma and Durga, but all should believe in Guru Nanak and his successors. Let men of the four castes receive my baptism, eat out of the same vessel, and feel no contempt for one another.[3]

Gobind Singh thus gave a clarion call for battle against the Mughals. The Khalsa was honoured as the Legions of the Lord of Eternity (*Akal Purush ki Fauj*). This body became the collective guru whose decision would be final. In 1704, the Adi Granth became the guru and thus Nanak's concept of a living preceptor in human form was given a go-bye. The Khalsa became, so to say, a political community directed to live together in mutual love, to pray together as a congregation, to bathe in the pond, to worship the Adi Granth as the guru and to eat together. Gradually, other distortions crept in. For instance, they now began to advance the theory that the prevailing names of God such as Allah, Rama, Gobind, all are equally good. This is in violation of Nanak's doctrine of "unstruck melody" and five sounds. They also distorted Nanak's concept of Word Preceptor (*Shabd Guru*) by which he referred to the real, inner form of the guru, the form of Name. By *Shabd Guru* Nanak never meant the Adi Granth Sahib which, in any case, can never be the living guru of Nanak's conception. The concept of Soldier-Saint is as irrelevant to Nanak's spiritual doctrine as the insistence on Five Ks. These symbols could be useful for political identification of a community but they are irrelevant for anything even remotely spiritual. Nanak had nothing to do with any symbol. Similarly, he never involved himself in political battles or propaganda. He never made a fetish of "service to humanity." He would have been the last to ask his disciples to waste their spiritual energy in operating hospitals, colleges, acquiring properties, establishing independent states, running industries and fighting over control of gurudwaras. Nanak, of course, was for a normal married life but he never subordinated spiritualism to mundane concerns. All that happened after 1574 appears to be a systematic, though gradual, repudiation of Nanak's teachings, the cardinal tenet of which is to follow the Lord's Will. The Lord's Law is the Lord's Name which is given by the living guru in human form. Where is anything like militarization here ? And where is the scope for crusades ? The divine law is his command which can be obtained by listening to the sound in meditation. When Gobind Singh in his last behest said : "O beloved Khalse ! Let him, who desireth to

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behold me behold the Granth Sahib. Obey the Granth Sahib. It is the visible body of the Guru .." all that he created was a socio-political order with only a cover of religion. The members of this theocratic order are ordained to aspire ultimately for attainment of sovereignty and supremacy for the benefit of and service to humanity. In this context every Sikh is directed to include in his daily prayer the slogan "Raj Karega Khalsa"—a religious slogan which when interpreted politically is no superfluity but a genuine expression of the direction, desire and the ultimate goal of the Sikhs. It is against this background that gurudwaras which are places of worship have become not only centres for religious preachings but also as places for the Sikhs to meet together and decide their political future. The Golden Temple, and the other gurudwaras, have a theo-political status in the religion, history and traditions of the Sikhs, all of which is alien to Nanak's teachings.

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7

THE GLORY OF NANAK'S TEACHINGS: THEIR RELEVANCE TODAY

Nanak was the apostle of true spiritualism, the object of which is to liberate the spirit from the subjugation of body and mind which are basically inert. The spirit is a drop of the ocean of the Supreme Being and it has indissoluble links with Him. But His links with body and mind are permanently severed and they cannot enter the Region of Truth. True spiritualism, therefore, lies only in the pursuit of the spirit seeking to reunite with the ocean of which it is a drop. Those who reason that spirit is nothing but a quality produced by the physical elements uniting together in a particular order, and that as soon as these elements get separated the body is dissolved and so is the spirit, are materialists who fail to answer the basic question as to the origin of the elements themselves.

II

Nanak's hypothesis is that there is a Supreme God from Whom have emanated other deities such as Brahm and the trinity of the Creator, the Sustainer and the Destroyer. While the Supreme Being governs the Region of Truth, the lesser deities rule the second and third grand divisions of creation. Thus, those who deny the existence of the Supreme Being and worship the lesser deities are beyond the ken of true religion.

Since the second and third grand divisions cannot be the aim of a true disciple of Nanak, the various modes prescribed by different schools of metaphysics and philosophy to attain those regions must also be unacceptable to Him. These modes include the Pranayama Yoga, Buddhi Yoga, Ashtang Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Pran Yoga and other similar systems. Since these practices relate either to the body or the mind, and do not involve the spirit, they only bog down the true disciple into the miry slough of despondency and disaster.

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He who has fervent desire to reach the Region of Truth is alone entitled to be called Nanak's disciple and he alone would understand his teachings (*seekh*). He alone will pay heed to Nanak's concept of the True Name (*Satnam*). There is no scope here for coercion, enticements, demonstrations or propaganda.

III

So long as the powers of the second and third grand divisions namely, physical strength and will-power, were predominant, the practice of yogas mentioned above was possible. When, after lapse of countless ages, those powers were exhausted, the time for the awakening of the spirit came and saints like Kabir and Nanak chose to make their gracious advent here. They revealed the secret that while the spirit is the cause of the universe, itself it has been caused by Sound which emanates from the Supreme Being. They, therefore, imparted instructions in the three-fold mediation of which Word-Audition is the key (*Sahaj Yoga*). The required instruments for this are humility, devotion, company of the living preceptor, and love for the Supreme Being.

Similarly, the devotion advocated by Nanak is different from that of older eras when body and mind were predominant factors. Devotion for Nanak is that of the spirit to the Supreme Being by ascent through the current of Sound.

IV

According to Nanak, if a living guide is necessary for the study of sciences and arts, how much more is he needed for pursuits which are spiritual ? He has, therefore, repeatedly emphasized the need for the living preceptor and his guidance and grace. No book or temple can be his substitute. The lusts of the heart are desperately wicked, and it is the preceptor alone who can reveal the secret of the Name and equip the devotee to fight worldly desires and evils like doubt, envy, attachment, anger and ego.

The preceptor is one who is an adept in the practice of three-fold meditation, and has the secret of Name. Nanak's spiritual practice commences from the sixth ganglion because in withdrawing the two currents from the two eyes and uniting them at the sixth ganglion, the withdrawal of the current from the remaining five centres or sub-

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divisions is also effected. This subdues the gross mind. As a focus is formed at the sixth ganglion, the baser desires pertaining to the lower five ganglions will be eradicated and the spirit, riding on the current of Sound, will cross the second grand division and enter the Region of Truth. Obviously, this is the easiest way of controlling the gross mind. The old yogic practices like *dhoti* (cleansing the intestines by swallowing a ribbon of cloth and bringing it out), and *basti* (enema by drinking plenty of water and taking it out by pressing the belly) were designed to clear the three lower ganglions. *Pranayama Yoga* was in vogue for ascending from the fourth ganglion to the sixth. These yogas are nearly impossible for the modern man to practice. For gaining ascess to the second grand division the recitation of *Om* was recommended. But no one knows the exact location of *Om* or the mode of operation by which it could be gained. The rites and rituals of Hinduism (*karm kand*) and Islam (*shariyat*) are outside the ken of spiritualism for these can, at best, take one to the region of astral bodies. Thus, it is in this context that one can appreciate the value of Nanak's three-fold meditation, including Word-Audition. It is an easy, pleasant and straightforward path with no encumberances of time, place, age, sex or nationality.

V

To Nanak, the first requirement for spiritualism is a strong desire for it. One who has the desire for it will also find time to do some research into its mysteries. Faith cannot be inherited. One should not, therefore, accept even Nanakism without a proper understanding of it. The test of any faith should be whether it helps the devotee in cleansing the mind of negative traits or not ? Inner clean-up is more complicated and difficult and requires more patience. But if the desire is sincere, one is bound to find the right path and succeed. The research involves identification of negative traits, a reasonable acquaintance with spiritual practices and the company of other seekers of Truth. Carnal cogitations are bad company and so is the company of seekers of the world.

VI

The genuine disciple of Nanak has only one primary objective and that is the release of the spirit from the thraldom of body and gaining access to the Region of Truth. The path is the same as one traverses in the states of deep slumber and death. The means of the

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journey is the current along which the spirit has descended. And this is attainable only with the grace of the living preceptor who will reveal, instruct, help and supervise. The awareness on the part of the devotee that he cannot move ahead without his guidance and protective care is crucial to the success of the endeavour.

The devotee must have complete faith in the preceptor which means that he must be convinced that this creation came into being so that spirit may attain the state of supreme bliss; that pains and pleasures here are meant only to aid the release of spirit from bondage ; that while this world appears to be that of cause and effect, the real inspiration behind all change and events come from the Supreme Being who is the Final Cause and Uncaused Cause ; that He not only can change the causes to produce the desired effects but can also change the effects flowing from certain causes without changing the causes ; that man has both freewill (rotation) and predestination (revolution), the former leaving man free to act or not to act in a particular manner, and the latter setting the ulttimate limits of that free will. Rotation means a person going around himself (self-centred) and revolution (circumambulation) means a person going around someone more energetic than himself. If man had been condemned only to freewill, he would have destroyed himself and annihilated the entire creation. It is by virtue of predestination that everything keeps its place, from sun and moon down to the plant, and does not go outside its orbit or stray beyond a particular point. The way to attain salvation is Word-Audition in which Sound is the preceptor and spirit the disciple. In other words, he in whom Sound has fully manifested is the preceptor, and he in whom spirit has started emerging from the bondage of body and mind is the disciple. The two will meet only by His Grace.

VII

Nanak has explained the concept of Grace of the Supreme Being. The spirit is of the same essence as the Supreme Being. So long as any part of spirituality remains dormant, there cannot be total satisfaction. When the entire spirituality becomes fully kinetic, then alone will there be total contentment. The Supreme Being has, by his, Grace, so arranged that the spirit never gets total peace and satisfaction in the third and second grand divisons. If one were to become contented he would also become quiescent and would not be able to go

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further. It is only when spirit reaches the abode of the Supreme Being that it will have complete peace and contentment. This is predestined.

VIII

What does Nanak mean by Sound, Word or Name ? He says that Sound is the supreme creator and the prime mover of everything, that it is the manifestation of the Supreme Being, and that it is the source of spirit-entity also. Thus, spirit alone is entitled to merge into Sound; the mind is outside its realm. Mind has different levels—at the three lower centres of the body, it is beastly mind ; at the heart centre, it is man's mind ; at the throat centre, it is the soul-mind ; at the sixth ganglion, it is the god-mind ; higher up in the second grand division, it is the spiritual mind. But, even at its purest, mind remains engrossed in matter and desire. It cannot, therefore, enter into the Region of Truth which is the native region of spirit and where it will soar up on the current wave of Sound.

IX

The followers of Guru Nanak have introduced in the Adi Granth doctrines entirely repugnant to his basic teachings. For instance, it is argued that God is the same, by whatever name one calls Him. Nanak never said it. In the six ganglions of the body, there is water; higher up, there is water as well as milk. Still higher up, there is milk ; and at the peak there is butter. A place can be labelled in accordance with its grade. If there is one Supreme Being, as evidently there is one, His name should also be one and not many. All names cannot be the same.

A real Name cannot be dissociated from the nature and essence of the object whose name it is. Similarly, all modes of spiritual practice cannot be put on the same footing. Those of sight and audition excel the rest. When one discipline's one's eyes through the visualization of the preceptor's form (*dhyana*), it cannot be that one can contemplate on any form. *Similarly*, one cannot gain access to the Region of Truth by listening to any Word or Name ; it has to be the Name as revealed by the preceptor and not picked up from a book.

From here right up to the Region of Truth there are numerous deities representing different religions and paths. It cannot be that no

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matter which path is followed, all will reach the same destination, just as one may proceed along any radius of a circle, and always reach the same centre. The creation does not exist on a plane surface and no analogy with a circle can be drawn. All the centres have gone on receding within, one into another. On proceeding along a sound current, which has issued forth from a particular centre, one will reach that centre. But one cannot reach a centre which lies deeper and higher than that. A follower of Nanak will, therefore, follow only that path which leads to the Region of Truth.

X

There are reformers who are so obsessed by the social need for tolerance, that they have drawn something from one religion and something from others, and have produced an amalgam which they profer as the panacea for all religious conflicts. They claim that it offends none, pleases everyone and all can gain from it. This is self-deception. How can poison and nectar be mixed up ? The fact is that there can be no compromise between truth and falsehood. As Kabir said : "Saint is he who always speaks the truth ; it may lead to union or disunity." Most religions seek to preserve and strengthen the third or second grand divisions. Nanak seeks to sever the links of the spirit with both and take it to the Region of Truth. He believes in destroying the bonds of his followers with this world. How can those who are committed to strengthening this region and keep the spirit entrapped be reconciled with those who wish to destroy those bonds ?

XI

Any attempt to reform this planet so as to remove all evil is bound to end in failure. This region itself is one of admixture of good and evil. There is no object or action here which is good and beneficial to all alike. If by a good deed a large number of people are benefitted, there will also be some who will be harmed. Total elimination of evil will mean the disintegration of this region. Of course, one must always adopt the truth and fight evil and untruth as far as possible. It is, therefore, wrong to say that Nanak advocated the theory that true religion lies only in doing good to others.

XII

The institution of Adi Granth as the guru is total denial of all

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that Nanak stands for. He stands for the supremacy of Name which can be revealed only by a living preceptor in human form. Those who have no faith in Name, but outwardly lead an unblemished life and also do something for inner purification will not derive full benefit. Those who have received initiation into Name by the preceptor and have complete faith in it shall get the benefit of internal practice also. It will cut at the root of all evil propensities and the mind, and all physical organs will gradually come under control. Those who repeat the names picked up from religious books are unable to eradicate their evil tendencies. The small degree of steadiness which the mind obtains from such recitals as "I am not mind; I am distinct from body ; I am unborn and unassociated..." deludes them into regarding it as spiritual progress. In the Granth Sahib itself it has been enjoined "Seek ye the preceptor !"

Thus, the content of Nanakism in a capsular form is the quest for the perfect master. In it, there is no place for temples, scriptures, wars, propaganda, agitations, bitterness, militancy, acquisition of property, carving of independent states, fighting for political gains or contesting elections, struggle for language or script and, least of all, for violence. His faith is one of love, humility, and control of mind and senses through Word-Audition. That Word or Name is not to be found in any book but it can be revealed only by the living preceptor. That is what makes Nanak so relevant to contemporary world.

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8

CONCLUSIONS : WHAT NANAKISM IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

Nanak's hypothesis is that human life is different from that of lower animals which are born, grow and die. Animals cannot "act" because all "actions have an element of volition and reason which they do not have. There life is merely to bear the consequences of their past evil acts. Similarly, gods or angels also cannot act because their life is meant to enjoy the fruits of their past good acts. It is only given to man to "act" with a view to extricate himself from the recurring process of birth and rebirth, the so-called *Lukh Chaurasi* which has been misinterpreted by people to suggest that there are eighty-four lakhs of the species of the living beings. The phrase implies eighty-four currents resulting from three qualities viz., potential consciousness (*sat*), activity (*rai*) and restraint (*tam*), multiplied by twenty-five realities (*prakritis*) and the addition of nine different combinations of three qualities, ie, $3 \times 25 + 9 = 84$.

The entire creation can be compared to a huge prison with eighty-four cells, none of which, except the human form, has an outlet. Man alone has the potential of escaping from this prison. God has given to man, Nanak says, " the pride of place. For whosoever slips from this ladder continues to suffer from the pangs of birth[1] and death."[1] So that "even gods and goddesses pine for the human body in which resides the Lord Himself."[2] Not only does He live within the human body, but it is only through this body that He manifests Himself. The temple of God is this body which manifests the rarest gems of knowledge, but worldly men do not know this."[3] Again, he says : "The human body is a beautiful town in which you obtain divine nectar."[4]

Where is, then, the concept of scriptures or gurudwaras in Nanak ? He declares : "Whosoever seeks the Lord elsewhere, and not within his body, is a fool; in delusion does he wander from place

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to place like the deer, who, in quest of its own musk, looks into bushes and shrubs."[5]

II

The focal point of Nanakism is, therefore, not the external worship of a building (the gurudwara) or a book (the Granth Sahib) but one's personal experience of the Divine. Personal experience alone can take one beyond the contingent factors such as time and space, and their attendant evils like instability, dissolution, and transmigration. It poduces bliss, beatitude and external peace, a state without expansion, contraction and decay as also beyond cause and effect.

'Personal experience' is sometimes referred to as "mystic". Nanak's mysticism is not vague or sloppy; it is not mystery-mongering or occultism and has nothing to do with ghosts; it is also not such parapsychological phenomena as telepathy, telekinesis, clairvoyance or precognition.

The mystic consciousness of Nanak is of a different order. Our ordinary consciousness is like a building with three floors—the ground floor consists of physical sensations : sight, sound, smell, taste and touch—and organic sensations; the first floor consisting of images, which are mental copies of our sensations; and the second floor containing the intellect, which is the faculty of concepts and which has reasoning and abstract thinking. These three floors comprise all the cognitive elements or ordinary consciousness, out of which arise emotions, desires and volitions. This whole structure is called "sensory-intellectual consciousness." Mystic consciousness is qualitatively different from it, for it is devoid of any sensation whatsoever, as also of concepts or thoughts. It is not a sensory intellectual consciousness, so that it cannot be described or analysed within the framework of any or all of the elements of sensory-intellectual consciousness.

That is why, the mystics say that their experiences are ineffable. They involve an ultimate non-sensuous unity in all things, oneness or a One which the senses or reason cannot penetrate. Nanak says : "One alone pervadeth, O Nanak ! No second was there, nor ever shall be."[6] Again, "All is God, all is God; without God is nought."[7]

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And, then: "He Himself is the pot, and Himself the pot-maker, and Himself the clay of the pot!"

Nanak's mystic expression is accompanied by a strong affective tone generally described as bliss and beatitude; it is basically different from empirical pleasures, which are limited in range and relative in scope, which soon get satiated and can change into painful states, and which are always relative to certain unpleasant conditions. For instance, the pleasure of eating is relative to a state of hunger which is not pleasant. In contrast, the mystic bliss is unlimited and absolute; it suffers no satiety or decline; it is permanent; and it is perfect because it is not subject to, and is not preceded by, an unpleasant state. The mystic experience is also marked by a sense of superior value, the realization that the mystic has realised the Ultimate Truth.

In broad terms, mystical experience are both "extrovertive" and "introvertive" both being apprehensions of the One but both reaching it in different ways. The "extrovertive" looks outward through the physical senses into the external world and finds the One there. The "introvertive" finds the One at the bottom of the self. He claims that he plugs the inlets of the physical senses so that no sensations could reach consciousness. This is sought to be achieved through constant and hard practice (*abhyas*). Having got rid of all sensations, the "introvertive" mystic excludes from consciousness all sensuous images, and then all abstract thoughts, reasoning processes, volitions and other particular mental contents. And, yet, there is no void or vacuum. Consciousness, even at this stage, does not lapse; it becomes pure, in the sense that it is not the consciousness of any empirical content. It has, so to say, no content except itself. This is self or God-realization. Comparing the insipid pleasures of the senses with the unbounded bliss of mystic experience, Nanak says. "Nine doors there are, and tasteless are all of them, for the real nectar droppeth inside the tenth."[8]

The nine doors are rectum, reproductive-organ, mouth, the two nostrils, eyes and ears. The tenth door is the sixth ganglion through which the spirit-entity passes from the third into the second grand division. It is the point where the optic nerves of the two eyes meet in the middle line—the portal of death.

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III

The paradox involved in this experience of the undifferentiated unity is that there should be a positive experience which has no positive content—an experience which is both something and nothing (what Stace calls as the plenum-vacuum paradox).[9]

It seems that in this experience, the mystic gets rid of the empirical ego which is replaced by the pure ego. The former is the stream of consciousness, the latter is the unity which holds the manifold stream together. This is undifferentiated unity which is the essence of all introvertive mystical experience and is achieved by years of practice.

Now, there are different mystic schools which select different parts of the body for concentration and recommend different exercises and courses. We have the *Karma Yoga* of the Gita which insists on performance of duty (*Karma*) without any desire for reward. It does not prescribe any concrete technique to achieve this. There is the *Upasana Yoga* (up=near, asana=sit, *ie*, sitting near the object of worship) which turns both on worship of idols and that of inner images which, however, are not scientifically explained. In the *Lai Yoga* one tries to awaken the *Kundalini* (the Coiled One) and collect all conscious currents within oneself through inner repetition of some holy name. The question of questions, however, is how to identify and obtain this holy or great name. In *Raj Yoga* one collects one's attention behind the two eyes through detachment from the material world and discrimination between the real and the unreal, good and evil. The author of *Raj Yoga* or *Ashtang Yoga* is Patanjali. The eight limbs of this yoga are :

(1) *Yama*, the five abstentions, not to :
  (i) injure (*ahimsa*)
  (ii) lie
  (iii) steal
  (iv) be sensual, and
  (v) be greedy

at this stage there is death of desire and the individual abandons self-seeking, so that he leaves all material interests and wishes all things well ;

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(2) *Niyama*, the five observances, to be :

(i) clean
(ii) content
(iii) self-controlled
(iv) studious, and
(v) devoted;

(3) *Asana*, (balanced posture) : "the posture must be steady and pleasant" (Aphorism ii 46) ;

(4) *Pranayama*, (regularity of breathing) ;

(5) *Pratyahara*, (abstraction), in which one withdraws the mind from all sense objects ;

(6) *Dharana*, (concentration) ;

(7) *Dhyana*, (fixed meditation), an almost hypnotic condition, one which may be produced by repetition of the sacred syllable, *Om* ;

(8) *Samadhi*, (trance contemplation), in which the mind is completely merged with totality, a condition which cannot be described in words ; thus "through yoga must yoga be known." In this final stage, one may obtain direct, intuitional knowledge. The mind is dissolved. Self-illumination results. This is the perfect life of the spirit.

Detachment, however, is possible only through love, and unless one begins by loving the more beautiful, one cannot be detached from the less beautiful. It is, therefore, essential that the practitioner first sees the most beautiful. In *tapasya*, one practices ascetism and penances which only strengthen the ego making God-realization impossible. Here, it is not the spirit which wins over the flesh ; it is the subtle flesh which wins over the coarse flesh.

The *Hatha Yoga* is a variant of penances (*tapasya*) and involves arduous practices to cleanse the body and hard postures which protect it against diseases. It also makes the practitioner more arrogant and egoistic. *Pranayama* is designed to control breathing and it can enable a person to merge himself with the subtle essence of breath which is the source of air. The *Jnana Yoga* takes one to knowledge of the nature of soul and its oneness with God. But, to do this, one has to cultivate four accomplishments : detachment from the world ; discrimination between the real and the unreal ; the six forms of success

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(*shat sampatti*) which are control of mind, control of the body, contentment and tolerance, patience, fidelity and sincerity ; and eagerness for liberation.

The *Mantra Yoga* employs repetition of words to produce the desired effect. All the hymns of the Vedas are considered mantras. The pronunciation of the mantra must be accompanied by right intention and belief in the mind. It must be repeated often with a definite intonation, such as in a loud voice, a low voice, or a chant. One of the most powerful mantras is the one from the Gopalatapani and Krishna Upanishads :

Klīm. Krishnāya, Govindāya, Gopījana, Vallabhāya Swāhā

Those who practise *Laya Yoga* prefer :

Om, aim, klīm, strīm

Om requires special mention, as it is the word, the true name, not merely the given name, of the "one life without a second," pronunciation of which is a means to harmony with the divine.[10]

The *Tantra Yoga* uses the scriptures connected with the worship of the mother of the universe (*Shakti* or Durga, Siva's divine consort). She is considered to be the principle of Primal Energy, the feminine (negative) principle. Most of the *tantras* are written in the form of dialogues between Siva and Durga, and contain five topics : the evolution and manifestation of the universe ; the destruction of the universe ; the adoration of the divinities ; the achievement of what you want, especially the six superhuman faculties ; and the (four) methods of union with God, by meditation.[11]

The study of *tantric* texts is said to reveal clairvoyance, clairaudience, telepathy, psychometry, the power of sound, vocal expression and the composition of music. The purpose of the *tantras* is to produce liberation from ignorance and rebirth, through direct knowledge. "Knowledge" is used in the Biblical sense, including the intense concentration of sex. The word *tantra* means loom, the warp or threads in the loom. By extension, it means a rule or ritual for ceremonial rites. Whereas the *sutras* are public works, the *tantras* are secret documents, for the use of initiates only.

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Finally, there is the *Bhakti Yoga* based on the principle of love and devotion. In all pre-Kabir and pre-Nanak systems, this yoga was within the framework of body and mind. They, for the first time, adopted the model of devotion in which the devotee was not body or mind but the spirit, the object was not Brahm but the Supreme Being, and the mode was the three-fold meditation or *Sahaj Yoga* of which Word-Audition is the most important (See Chapter 5).

IV

The basic theory of Word-Audition is based on the self-evident postulate that each sphere is maintained by a presiding deity, which constitutes the focus of power or vitality peculiar to that sphere. The force-currents prevalent in a sphere take their rise from the presiding deity, and sounds peculiar to those currents, accompany them. We have currents in our body, in the nervous centre, which correspond to the sphere. These currents are, however, not active in the same way as the currents coming out from the presiding deity. They perform certain functions peculiar to the sphere in respect of the maintenance of the physical body ; but the subjective functions, viz., perception, comprehension and regulation are latent.

Now, if we were to repeat internally a Name which is an imitation in articulate speech of the sound emanating from the presiding deity of a sphere at the point of the nervous centre corresponding to that sphere, the vibrations set up therein by this process will, as the practice advances, come into harmony with the vibrations in sounds already existent in the sphere. And when the unison or concord of the two sets of vibrations is complete, they would respond to each other like the response of a tuning-fork which is in harmony with a musical instrument. The subjective functions and powers of the deity would then be imbibed, and the great force which he wields in his sphere could be set in motion by the utterance, within, of the holy name at the will of the devotee. This is technically known as *mantra siddhi*, that is to say, the acquistion of the powers of the holy name.[12]

For a very long time the internal repetition is more or less, superficial, as all our tendencies are outward, and the internal repetition does not stir up the true tune-chord. The outward tendency introduces all sorts of thoughts and ideas at the time the holy name is

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being repeated. The diversion of attention due to the ingress of such thoughts is a great impediment, and the repetition of the holy name is, therefore not so effective as it would otherwise be. A great combat, ensues at the time of practice and until the outward tendencies are more or less overcome, the internal currents of the centre at which the repetition is being performed cannot be properly brought into action and developed. The material or the outward endencies have been generated and strengthened by exercise, as it were, throughout almost the twenty four hours of every day since our birth. Accordingly, a contrary condition cannot prevail by a practice for a short time every day extending over a few months or even over a few years.

The exact process of internal repetition of holy names is not often known to persons who practise such repetition and even if they correctly perform the practice, the necessary guidance is often wanting. This is the reason why a notion has now become prevalent that the holy names do not possess that efficacy at present, which they possessed originally. But this is a mistaken view. The names possess the same efficacy as they possessed before, but proper training or guidance is not so easily available as it was earlier.

Now, the principle seems to be established that in accordance with the laws of harmony, the repetition within, of articulate sounds (without regard to their meaning) which are an imitation of the sounds accompanying the emanation of a force out of the presiding deity of a sphere, at a nervous centre corresponding to that sphere, can result in the acquisition of the power of that deity. This principle is enunciated by Moinuddin Chishti in the following words :

> There is no difference between the name of the deity and the deity; the refulgence of that name shows the beatitude of the object of worship.

Similarly, Tulsi Das, the famous compiler of the Ramayana, said "Name and the object of Name are parallel to water and its waves ; no difference should be seen between the two."

The names are the imitations in articulate speech of the sounds peculiar to various spheres. They should not be confounded with ordinary words used to denote objects or thoughts and feelings.

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By common consent, no force can act without a focus and currents. So long as the currents are non-existent the force is merely potential. With the rise of currents, which takes place by a previous commotion in the reservoir or focus, the potentiality is converted into kinetic action and work commences. Obviously, if there were no reservoir or focus, there would be no currents. These principles apply to the spiritual force also. It would perhaps be more accurate to say that the characteristics of the forces of nature owe their origin to the characteristics of the prime energy, viz., the spiritual force. The origin of creation must, in accordance with this view, have commenced with an upheaval and subsequent flow of spiritual currents from the infinite reservoir of spirituality, the true Supreme Being. So long as these conditions had not taken place, there was no creation, and the Supreme Being had not manifested Himself till then as the Creator.

In a field of magnetic force, the action at all points is towards the magnetic centre and if we look merely at the converging tendency, the idea of the prevalence of that force in a field or sphere of action, away from the pole, involves a contradiction. If, however, we take into consideration the magnetizing effect of the pole on the ions of the surrounding ether which consists in the sorting of the positive and the negative ions around the positive and negative poles respectively, the contradiction disappears, and the process of the manifestation of the currents of an attractive force becomes comprehensible. This is the way in which the spiritual current manifested itself from its spiritual source.

Commotion in the spiritual source preceding the manifestation of the spiritual currents, and the currents themselves, were both the manifestation of the prime energy in two different kinetic forms ; and so both of them must have been accompanied by sound. It is almost self-evident that the sound which accompanied the commotion was distinct from the sound which accompanied the currents. This distinction between the source-sound and the current-sound applies to the innermost of the spirit action of all presiding deities of the various spheres of creation. This has, however, been overlooked, and the sounds of the manifest functions of the various deities have alone been reduced to mantras.

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The greatest holy name or the mantra as revealed in the Vedas, *ie*, *Om*, does not represent distinctly the spiritual current-sound and the source-sound underlying it. It is merely an imitation in articulate speech of the sounds accompanying the functions of Brahm (the Universal Mind) in the second grand division.

The distinction between the sound accompanying the functional work of a deity other than the true Supreme Being, the source and origin of all spirituality, and that accompanying, the focus and current actions of spirit, may be elucidated by the following illustration :

> Our thinking ego, *ie*, the mind, is an instrument dependent for the performance of its functions upon the spirituality derived from the centre of the spirit. These functions are set at work after the spirituality emerges at the mental plane. Their character is quite distinct from that of the spiritual current and the spiritual centre which have supplied the vitality.
>
> The sound and vibrations at the mental plane of the various functions of mind are the result of the passage of the spirit through the mental plane and are distinct from the spirit-sounds as blue light produced by the passage of white light through blue lens is distinct from white light. If one had the power of penetrating the lens and perceiving the two lights concomitantly, the great difference between their character would be apparent to him. A similar distinction exists between the mental and spiritual sounds but this distinction is not apparent to those who do not possess access to the innermost quarter of spirit.

The functional sounds or the manifest holy names of the various deities are similarly distinct from the sounds of internal spirit-currents supplying the spiritual energy to the deities. In the case of the prime origin and source of spirit alone, *ie*, the true Supreme Being, this distinction disappears, as the manifestation of the spirit-current itself constitutes the function.

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All the incarnations and prophets before Kabir and Nanak revealed only the names or mantras of the functional powers of their respective deities.

Nanak, refers to the bell-sound (ding-dong or *tan tan*) and the sound of conch which one can hear at the sixth ganglion. This is the transcendental music :

> Close then, the nine doors and collect thy scattered mind in the tenth which leadeth thee to thy true home ; their ringeth the transcendental music day and night which thou canst hear except with the help of a mystic adept.[13]

Again :

> Nine doors He manifesteth but the tenth keepeth He hidden ; through devotion to the mystic adept, to some He showeth the tenth door, which opens out forms of wondrous beauty and the Nine Treasures beyond description.[14]

VI

Thus, Sound does not connote a religious hymn or song ; it does not mean Granth Sahib ; it does not include what the Sikhs now call *Shabad Kirtan*. Any such interpretation of Sound is a distortion of Nanak's faith. To him, Sound is a superconscious transcendental entity. It refers to the first manifestation of Primal Energy which was latent previously. As the action of the spirit–force is inward and attractive, the effect produced by the sound which accompanied its manifestation must also have been inward and attractive. This original outburst has imparted its impress to all spiritual sounds, thus endowing them with the attributes mentioned above. When they are listened to, an inward stress of great intensity is felt by the spirit–entity A regular performance of this method of devotion results in the ascension of spirit towards the higher planes from which the spiritual sounds proceed. These sounds are, however, very subtle and they cannot be properly heard, until the latent forces of the spirit have been developed, to some extent, by the other two modes of devotion—Name-recitation and contemplation of the preceptor's form. The perception of the true spiritual sounds of higher spheres is an advanced stage of spiritual training. The performance of Word-Audition is not, however, deferred for a long time on this account. It is commenced

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after the devotee has undergone training in the methods of contemplation and Name-recitation for a period of six weeks to two months.

Nanak says that the Sound cannot be heard with these ears, nor uttered by this tongue. Pen cannot write it, language cannot describe it. Where, then, is the scope for singing songs or hymns to the accompaniment of harmonium ? According to him, Sound transcends human understanding, goes beyond all duality and relativity and penetrates all things and beings. Without it, there is darkness in us. Without it, the mortal coil cannot be removed, nor can the cycle of transmigration come to an end. It is called by Christ as "The Word", and by the Muslim sufi–saints as *Awaz-i-Ghaib* or *Ism-i-Azam.*

Thus, to Nanak, Sound is God's very being and essence. It created the spirit-entity which in turn created the rest of the universe. In essence, therefore, spirit and Sound are one, and the latter attracts the former like a magnet. In this attraction lies the secret of Nanak's Word-Audition, and emancipation of the spirit. Thus, he says: "Without it (Word-Audition) one will keep on coming and going."[15] It is an exhortation to conquer death !

VII

He insists that it is possible to cross the portals of death while living, by the practice of Word-Audition as prescribed by the living preceptor ! "Where thou hast to go after death, O Man ! Conquer that realm while living."[16] Again : "Such a yoga do thou practise, O Nanak, that thou diest even while living!"[17] The very first step in Nanak's Word-Audition is to conquer the seat of death, ie, the sixth ganglion ; it is after this that the spirit enters the second grand division and then into the Region of Truth where there is no dissolution.

To Nanak, then, the finite contains the infinite ; the Supreme Being is the macrocosm, and man, the microcosm. The transcendent Absolute is screened in flesh and blood and the Supreme Being is concealed in the human frame : "In the body resideth He Himself, the transcendent divine Being, but the gross-headed man of the world knoweth it not, and seeketh Him outside."[18] Again : "As scent is in flower and reflection in the mirror, so is God within thee. In thine own body do thou seek Him, O brother ! Where is, in all this,

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the scope for externalities which his followers are practising these days ?

VIII

God is within us as spirit and can be realized if our spirit merges into the Sound of which it is the current. Nanak's argument is that the organ of knowing must be suited to the object of knowledge. For instance, our eyes cannot see in light which is too bright or dim and our ears cannot hear sounds which are too loud or low. We need special instruments to see or hear them. Similarly, to know something subtle we must become subtle. Absolute reality is extremely subtle and in order to know it, we have to reside within our subtle, transcendent self.

By saying that God is within us, Nanak did not mean that He is not without; but unless he is realized within, He cannot be discovered outside. Thus the difference between the "introvertive" and "extrovertive" mystic experience is not absolute as some people have tried to make out.

IX

The key to mystic experience lies with the living preceptor. It is he who reveals the Name and guides the seeker along the path of ascension; it is he whose image is the object of meditation. Often, the pilgrim gets tired; his will weakens; he is tempted by mind and physical pleasures; he becomes impatient and feels discontented; he can develop doubt which is the worst traitor. He cannot overcome such hurdles at his own. It is the preceptor who shows the light.

The three things required to learn an ordinary skill are will, technique and practice. The same is true of spiritual journey. Ill-directed effort will be not only futile but may prove to be harmful. If we have to reach the airport, and due to lack of proper instruction, we have taken the opposite direction, the more we move, the farther we will be from our destination. Similarly, recitation of a name picked up from the Vedas or Bible will take the seeker nowhere. On the other hand, it will cause harm by making him arrogant. Thus,

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the Guru said : "They worship but they know not the way!" According to Hafiz Shirazi :

> If your master asks you to soak with wine the mat intended to be used for saying *namaaz*, do so instantly. Hesitate or doubt not in the slightest degree ! He who gives out the secrets of path to you is in the know of all the secrets of various stages on the way.[20]

The fact that we are still in bondage to the cycle of birth and death and suffer ceaselessly shows that by our own effort alone we could not liberate ourselves. Nanak affirmed : "If by ourselves could we attain union with God why should we have suffered the pangs of separation ? Why through mystics do we realise Him, O Nanak, and experience the rapture ?"[21] Again : "Without preceptor none can obtain Name for this, the Lord has Himself ordained."[22] Elsewhere, he declared : "Let no one remain in delusion in the world ; without the preceptor no one shall ever go across the ocean of phenomena."[23]

And, who is the true preceptor ? The true preceptor is he who is absorbed in the Sound, who has through Word-Audition reached the Region of Truth and can, therefore, lead others to that region. He, Nanak says, is indispensable for spiritual realization. The master "is the key, man the lock, mind the chamber, and body the roof. Without him, mind's door cannot be opened, O Nanak, and none else hath the key."[24] God and preceptor are the same but, for the seeker, preceptor is more important because he alone can take the seeker to Him. "God and His mystics are one, in this have no doubt; as the wave riseth above the water and mergeth into it again."[25]

X

Nanak has referred to Five Sounds in the Japji. These are heard in five different spiritual regions through which the spirit passes on its way to the Region of Truth. Although Sound is all-pervading but in the spiritual ascensions, it runs through five stages and takes on differing forms in these stages. It is like the course of a river which has the character of its source---in the high mountains, in the valley below, in the vast plains, at the delta and in the ocean

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into which it merges ultimately. Just as the same water assumes different forms at the various stages of its course. similarly Sound which passes through various spiritual realms—the Region of Thousand-Petalled Lotus (*Niranjan*), the Region of Three Prominences (*Om*), the Spirit Sphere (*Rarang*), the Vortex Cave (*Sohang*), to the Region of Truth (*Sat or Haq*) assumes different forms. But just as one who wishes to know the entire course of the river must know all the changes it undergoes in the terrain through which it passes, similarly, the perfect preceptor must be familiar with all the changes which Sound undergoes in the spiritual realms through which it passes. This is how Nanak describes the true preceptor. "He who showeth Home within the home is the true adept."

XI

Most of the commentators on Nanak have emphasized that Nanak a was social revolutionary, that he served as a bridge between communities, that he was a humanist, that he spoke up against injustices to untouchables and backward sections of society including women, that he rose against superstitions and religious ceremonials, that he advocated the cause of brotherhood of man, that he introduced music in the congregation and that he was a great moral force. To say all this is really to say nothing of Nanak. A saint of the stature of Nanak would only ask for such norms on the part of his followers as are basic to the requirements of Word-Audition. For this yoga, it is not necessary to have early bath, or to observe fasts, or to go to pilgrimage, or to worship any idol whatsoever from the image of a stone to gurudwara or any book, or put on the sacred thread, or to observe *varna ashrama*, or to run to forests or mountains or rivers or heaps of fires for penances, or to show miracles, or to recite mantras, perform *yajnas* or to practise celibacy and to renounce one's vocation. Such practices and denials may actually be harmful to a devotee. What Nanak says is that for a practitioner it is necessary to earn his livelihood honestly, to shun all desire to earn riches and wealth or to acquire power, to avoid non-vegetarian diet, to have a simple living style, to avoid gambling, backbiting, espionage, extra-marital relations, giving false testimony, usury and so on :

> Gambling, theft, espionage, bribery, usury and infidelity must be given up by a person who is a seeker of God.

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Indeed, spiritual or mystical experience is that part of the human experience out of which moral feelings follow. It is the source of all ethical values.

Not that such norms, in themselves, can lead you to the spiritual experience. A person can be seen living honestly and upto the norms just mentioned, and yet he may be ignorant of spiritualism and unfit for Word-Audition. And, conversely, if a person is, under the perfect preceptor performing Word–Audition, these moral qualities would come to him without effort. If a person with the aid of logic, reason or social pressures observes principles of morality, that is good as far as it goes. But it does not go very far ! He may revert to degradation as soon as he gets an opportunity to do so. Restraint for him is like cutting out all the branches and leaves of a tree. As soon as it is watered and gets manure, the branches come up once again, and this time, with renewed vigour and strength. Similarly, unless the roots of immorality are exterminated from the inner consciousness, even sages such as Vishwamitra, may resort to perversities of all sorts. What Nanak says is, that the preceptor helps in removing the roots of immorality by liberating the spirit from the control of mind and body. It is the spirit that feeds the mind and the body, but it is itself hungry and thirsty because neither mind nor body have anything in their stores to feed it. The food of the spirit is the recitation of the name and merger in the sound out of which it has come. Until it gets back to it, it will keep on wandering homeless, in exile, and hungry and thirsty. Word-Audition, is therefore, the only answer to the needs of the spirit. Once it is free, mind and body begin to starve and eventually die and return to their own sources – mind going back to Brahm and body to *Maya*. The spirit then soars high into the Region of Truth where its home is lying vacant, awaiting its arrival.

III

As long as the spirit is not so liberated, it remains an individual self covered by the mind and body, which envelope it in the framework of ego. This egoism (*ahankar* or "I am" or "I act") is the source of dualism (mine and thine), conflict (good and bad), desire, anger, avarice, attachment, intolerance, aggression, selfishness, hatred, malice etc. The necessary emotional counterpart of the separateness

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of selves is that basic hostility which is characterstic of Hobbes' view of the inherent selfishness of man, which makes the state of nature as "solitary, nasty, brutish and short"—something that one finds today in the Punjab. But the natural, emotional counterpart of the spiritual or mystical consciousness of Nanak is "love", for, the spirit of everyone is a drop from the ocean of the Supreme Being. There. there is no separateness of you and I, or you and he ; we are all one in the universal self. Love, according to Nanakism, is not only the sole basis of morality, it is indeed its sole command. In that rapture of love, Nanak exclaims : "Say, whom shall we call good or bad, when all creatures are thine !"

As stated earlier, some of even those who have had no spiritual experience and also desire none, ie, those whose sole object of life is power, money, honour, family and children can be found to be living fairly ethical lives. After all even Brahm, and *Maya* who created the second and third grand divisions have to have some moral standards for the survival of their regions. That explains the theory of incarnations who have been descending here to restore the balance disturbed by the excess of evil beyond a certain degree. This done, the incarnation vanishes until there is degradation once again, causing the descent of yet another incaration, this time more powerful than the earlier one. But these incarnations do not exterminate the roots of evil, for, they represent those very forces which are its roots —viz., mind and body. Evidently, therefore, in some measure, people who are not yet mature for Word-Audition and who still seek the world of mind and body can be found to lead fairly high ethical lives. But all that is a chimera, a mirage. The morality practised by such people is merely a cover, for, such people have in them the real roots of immorality intact, and they will appear in their true colours at the first opportunity.

XIV

It is, therefore, only through Word-Audition that one can attain union of one's self with the cosmic self. And, yet, Nanakism is not escapism. It is not confined to emotional ecstasy of bliss which is selfishly enjoyed for its own sake. It is not a flight from life and from the urgent work of the world. Nanak insists that every person

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must marry and raise children and live a normal family life, but he must not permit the world to master him. His life is like a boat moving on water which this world is. If the boat is on the water, it will float ; but if the water gets into the boat, the boat will sink and the man will go down the depths of darkness. Every devotee and follower of Nanak must use the material world as merely a means for seeking union with the Lord. One cannot use religion as a cover to attain selfish objects—object dear to mind and body. Such a person is a slave of his passion and a cheat, and such persons cannot have access to Sound.

The charge against the practitioners of Word-Audition of living a self-centred life, therefore, is ill–conceived. His is the best charity ; his is the best social work, for, he is showing to others the path of real salvation. He does not live in the seclusion of an ashrama. He teaches you to have a really good and moral life from which you could never swerve, under any temptation whatsoever. He is not a social reformer as the university scholars, historians, philosophers and rulers understand social reform. He knows that society cannot be reformed except at a very superficial level. We bathe daily and gather dirt and filth again the same day. We cleanse our house daily because it gathers dust daily. We have to reform society every now and then because society also gathers dust and dirt every moment. This is an eternal process and reformers keep on coming and going. They introduce reform, which lasts for a couple of years or decades and the evil sets in again, bringing forth yet another reformer or incarnation. The revolutionay of yesterday becomes a reactionary today. The true spiritualist knows it all and he advises man to give up this wild goose chase and to get busy in reforming himself, ie, to attempt to liberate his spirit from dirt and dust (mind and body) with the force of Name which can be revealed only by a living, perfect master. Nanak stands for this and, for nothing less. If you follow that, you cannot have all that you are trying to have at present. But if you wish to adhere to what you are you are welcome to do so but do not pretend thet you are the disciples of Nanak. Nanak declared : "The whole world is suffering, O Nanak ! He alone is blessed, who resteth on the Name." Suffering is a consequence of finitude and will, therefore, persist so long as the finite (individual spirit) does not merge into the infinite (Sound).

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Finally, Nanak never envisaged religion as a creed or a set of dogmas or a cluster of institutions or a scripture. A saint who refused to describe himself as a Hindu or a Christian could never create another such community—of *Sikhs*. The term *Sikh*, however, merely describes a statement of fact—the fact of a person being a disciple. It is upto him to choose the teacher whose disciple he wishes to be. But it cannot be that you wish to call yourself the disciple of X and follow the teachings of Y! That is much less than honest.

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NOTES

1

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3. *Var Malhar*
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6. *Tuzk-i-Babri* : *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, edited by John Dowson, Calcutta, 1963, pp. 44–47
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8. Seth, Shiv Dayal alias Soami Ji Maharaj : *Sar Bachan Radha Soami Vartik*, Radhasoami Trust, Soami Bagh, Agra, Pt. I, para 31
9. Ibid.
10. It is a voluminous work, giving a fantastic account of Nanak's visit to the various spheres, the geosphere and the stratosphere
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2

1. Singh, Karan : *Katik Ki Baisakhi*, Amritsar, 1940, pp. 6-7
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3. Singh, Gopal : *Guru Nanak*, National Book Trust of India, New Delhi, 1979, Chapter I
4. Maheshwari, SD : *Sants, Sadhs, Mahatmas and Devotees of the Past*, Agra, 1980, p. 266
5. Ibid.
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8. Nanak : *Asa*

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12. Singh, Teja : *Was Guru Nanak Educated* published in 'Likhari' (Punjabi Journal), Vol. VII, No. I, January, 1937
13. See Saraswati, Dayanand : *Satyarth Prakash*, Chapter 2–3
14. The forest universities of India (*Gurukuls* and *Ashramas*) are the traditional centres of learning and spiritual discipline.
15. Nanak : *Var Asa*
16. Ibid.
17. Maheswari SD : op. cit., p. 268
18. Nanak : *Rag Sorath*
19. Ibid.
20. Nanak : *Var Malar*
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Gauri, MI.
24. Nanak : *Rag Suhi*
25. Nanak : *Japji* (Prelude).
26. *Surat-Shabd-Yoga* or *Word Audition* refers to the spiritual exercise by which the current of consciousness is applied to the hearing of the Sound within, without physical ears. It is also called *Sahaj Yoga.*
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28. Singh, Hakim Narain : *Sant Mat Darshan*, Ambala, 1940, Chapter 3.
29. Nanak : *Var Sarang*
30. Nanak : *Rag Maru*
31. Ibid.
32. Nanak : *Var Majh*
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3

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2. Nanak : *Rag Suhi*
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6. Ibid.
7. Nanak : *Var Asa*
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12. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 13, p. 179. Also see Vol. 20, p. 505 (1968 edition)
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14. Nanak : *Japji*, Sections 8, 9, and 10
15. Ibid., Section 11
16. Ibid., Sectlon 12
17. Ibid., Section 13
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., Section 14
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21. Elucidation of Japji, Radha Soami Satsang, Soami Bagh, Agra, 1975, p. 75
22. Ibid., p. 76
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Nanak : *Japji*, Section 16
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ramkali : *Sidh Gosti* (943)
33. *Parbati Bibhas IV* (1333)
34. Ibid. (1341)
35. Ibid. (1342)
36. *Gauri V* (239)

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37. Nanak : *Sri Rag* (31)
38. Nanak : *Var Majh V* (103)
39. Nanak : *Majh Ashtpadi I* (109)
40. *Gauri Poorbi IV* (172)
41. Nanak : *Rag Suhi, Channd III* (767)
42. Nanak : *Rag Asa*
43. Nanak : *Wadhans*
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Nanak : *Rag Dhanasri*
47. Ibid.

4

1. *Janam Sakhis*
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11. Ibid.
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13. Ibid.
14. *Janam Sakhis*
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Nanak : *Asa-di-var*
21. *Janam Sakhis*
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24. Nanak : *Var Majh*
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29. Maheshwari, SD : *Sants, Sadhs, Mahatmas and Devotees of the Past*, Agra, 1980, p. 270
30. Ibid., pp. 275–76
31. Ibid., p. 277
32. Ibid.
33. Quoted in Singh, Gopal : *Guru Nanak*, National Book Trust, India, New Delhi, 1967, p. 52
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Maheshwari, SD : op. cit., p. 278
37. *Jaham Sakhis*
38. Ibid.
39. Nanak : op. cit.
40. Nanak : *Var Majh*
41. Nanak : *Asa-di-var*
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43. Ibid.
44. Nanak : *Asa-di-var*
45. Ibid.
46. *Var Bhai Gurdas*
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Nanak : op. cit.
52. A *vali* is a sufi saint who is supposed to be a godman. The plural of *vali* is *aulia*.
53. The inscription reads : 'In memory of the guru, that is the Divine Master Baba Nanak Faqir Auliya, this building has been raised anew with the help of the Seven Saints. Year 927 Hijri (AD 1520-21).
54. Varma, SC : *Guru Nanak and The Logos of Divine Manifestation*, Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, Sisganj, Chandni Chowk, Delhi, 1969, pp. 21-22
55. *Janam Sakhis*
56. Maulana Rum : *Masnavi*, Sabrang Kitabghar, Delhi, 1977, Vol. I, p. 282, Vol. II, p. 293 and Vol. III
57. Nanak ; op. cit.
58. Ibid.

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59. Ibid.
60. Ibid. Nanak says : "Those who do not value and remember the true guru (which no book can be) are useless like tares standing in the field !"
61. Ibid. Nanak says that those who do not seek the Guru but only recite a name picked up from any book, their faces "others spit upon, on account of their gross hypocrisy !"
62. *Janam Sakhis*
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67. *Janam Sakhis*
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70. *Var Bhai Gurdas*
71. Ibid.
72. Nanak : *Asa-di-var*
73. Ibid.
74. *Janam Sakhis*
75. Nanak : op. cit.
76. Nanak : *Gauri*
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1. Nanak : *Japji-Mool Mantra*
2. *M* 3 *Majh* 117-8
3. *M*1 *Basant* 1190-10
4. *M*4 *Asa* 448-11
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8. Luke 8·11
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10. *M*3 *Ram Kali Var* 954-13
11. *M*1 *Ram Kali* 944-18
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13. Ibid., 944-12
14. *M1 Sorath* 634-12
15. *M3 Sorath Var* 644-2
16. *M4 Kalyan* 1326-1
17. *M1 Malar* 1275-2
18. *M1 Gauri* 222-15 ; *M1 Asa* 413-19 ; *M3 Basant* 1173-18
19. *M5 Suhi* 783-12
20. *M1 Sri Rag* 21-2
21. *M5 Bhairo* 1143-6
22. *M5 Asa* 393-16
23. M5 *Gauri* 247-18
24. M3 *Bhairon* 1154-20
25. Nanak : *Japji*, Section 5
26. M1 *Sri Rag* 1-10 and 4-15
27. Nanak : *Japji*, Section 6
28. Ibid., Section 7
29. M4 *Asa* 4 47-5
30. Layal, Naunihal Singh : op. cit., pp. 33-36
31. M1 *Sri Rag* 2-12
32. M1 *Ram Kali*, Dakhini, Onkar, 3
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Karam Khand) on to the fifth, viz. *Sa* (Absolute Truth or *Sachh Khand*); (2) tha the road to this lies through *Satsang*; (3 that *Satsang* means attending to the Su preme Being and listening to his hymns and carrying out his commands, and prac tise the hearing of 'unstruck melody'; (4 that the only name that counts is *Satnam* which one can have only from a living guru or his living disciple; (5) that all else is bad company operating under the direc tion of Satan in order to entangle man's spirit in the net of mind and body.

This work is based on primary sources. It spells out the distortions gradually intro duced in Nanak's teachings after his de parture.

Dr. Gupta was a member of the fac ulty of Political Science at Allahabad University for twenty years where he taught and guided research with dis tinction. He was awarded D. Litt. in 1965 by the Allahabad University on Indo-Ceylonese Relations which the then Sri Lankan High Commissioner in India hailed as a work of "vital impor tance".

He is the author of several treatises on international relations and political insti tutions and philosophy.

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